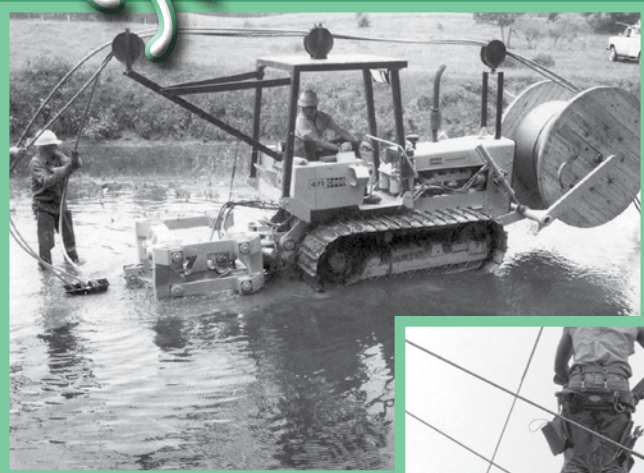


# Moments in Time



Clark Electric  
Cooperative

1937—  
2012





**F**or 75 years, our cooperative members have been connected by more than poles and wire. Our roots go deep because the most important connections have been between people.

We dedicate this book to our cooperative's founding members for their vision and commitment to electrify our rural region. The people of Clark, Chippewa, Jackson, Marathon, Taylor and Wood counties built a strong organization through cooperation. It is our responsibility to continue this legacy.



## Vision, Mission & Value Statement

### Our Vision

Members are the reason for our existence. We strive to be recognized and respected by our membership as providing the highest level of quality service and value through accountability, innovation, integrity, and commitment to community.

### Our Mission

To provide reliable, competitively priced energy and related services to our customers and maximum value to our members consistent with the wise use of resources and technology. We will work with our members to improve the social and economic well being of the region.

### Our Organizational Values

- ▲ We will strive to provide services that exceed our members' expectations, emphasizing honesty, quality, and sound business principles.
- ▲ Encourage the wise use of our energy resources.
- ▲ As we conduct our business, we will be responsible members of our community, good stewards of the environment, and follow safety practices while focusing on continuous improvement of our processes and services.
- ▲ Reference the Seven Cooperative Principles as our guide to our business platform.
- ▲ Practice fiscal responsibility.
- ▲ Working together, we have the power to make a difference.



# The Beginning

The United Nations designated 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives, the theme of which is “Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World.” Cooperatives are a model of self-reliance and an example of people working together to improve their quality of life.

It is indeed appropriate that the United Nations designated 2012 as the year of cooperatives because at Clark Electric Cooperative, we too celebrated our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of providing electric service to our members in 2012. “Cooperative enterprises build a better world” is certainly true of rural electrification and Clark Electric Cooperative. We offer *Moments In Time* as a way to tell our story and to provide some history and insight into your organization, Clark Electric Cooperative.

\* \* \*

Prior to the 1930s, American agriculture had long been struggling. Very few farms had access to electricity. Rural life was extremely difficult and very labor intensive. Cows were milked and watered by hand. Milking was done by the dim light of kerosene lanterns. Water was pumped by hand, and food was cooked over wood stoves. Laundry was done outside with a large tub of water suspended over fire to heat it. Children studied by the small circle of light cast by kerosene lamps. Outside the small circles of light, the rooms of a farmhouse were dark.

Seventy-five years ago, Americans were struggling to recover from the effects of the Great Depression. The lack of electricity made life an even greater struggle for rural citizens. Many of the agricultural leaders of that era declared that widespread farm electrification would be a primary force in rural rehabilitation, both economically

and socially. On May 11, 1935, by Executive Order 7037, President Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration. The Administration was endowed with \$100,000,000 for rural electrification. It was expected that the electric industry—investor-owned utilities that electrified urban centers—would embrace the program and begin some sort of rural electrification program. Unfortunately, investor-owned utilities saw no profit in providing electricity to sparsely populated areas. So, when it became evident that the power companies held little or no interest in building their lines into the rural community, farm folks began to talk in terms of organizing themselves into a cooperative corporation to do the job. This is where our story begins.

In the mid 1930s, three electric cooperatives were being organized in Clark County: Willard Electric Cooperative, in the Willard area; Big Four Cooperative Electrical Association, in the Spencer vicinity; and Clark Electric Cooperative. Willard Electric Cooperative came first.



*“Brothers and Sisters, I want to tell you this. The greatest thing on earth is to have the love of God in your heart and the next greatest thing is to have electricity in your house.”*

—Farmer giving witness in a rural Tennessee church in the early 1940s

The Articles of Incorporation were filed March 27, 1936, making it the second electric cooperative to be chartered by the state. The Big Four was third, just three days later on March 30, 1936. (The first electric cooperative in the state of Wisconsin was Richland Electric Cooperative, the only one of the three still existing today).

In terms of unofficial organizational meetings, Big Four preceded Willard with a session at Spencer on January 10, 1936. The meeting, attended by some 300 farmers, was arranged by the leadership of the Big Four Co-op Oil Company. Willard’s first unofficial organization meeting was held March 19, 1936, after a long period of person-to-person work by organizers. Cooperative organizers were handicapped by recent failures of a co-op elevator, a co-op packing company, and a farm machinery co-op.

Clark Electric Cooperative was organized independently and chartered on April 1, 1937. The first annual

meeting of the newly formed cooperative was held April 12, 1937. Vern G. Howard was chosen as the first president of Clark Electric Cooperative. Martin Klarich was elected vice president, and Wallace J. Landry was elected secretary-treasurer. The remaining original directors were L.T. Klein, C.F. Baldwin, Ed Klein, Rex Cooper, Gustave H. Voight, and Milton F. Page.

Throughout this period of time, The Big Four and Willard Electric Cooperative retained their status and identity. However, it was becoming apparent to the leaders of the REA movements in the county that one large cooperative project would be more satisfactory than the numerous smaller cooperatives in each of several communities that had originally been visualized. On June 26, 1937, representatives of these two pioneering cooperatives, along with representatives of Clark Electric Cooperative, met at the village hall in Loyal. Representatives from the Big Four and Willard Boards of Directors quickly approved resolutions to sell their respective assets to Clark Electric Cooperative. The Clark Board, voted to purchase. Thus, it took only this brief session to consolidate the leadership of these three electric cooperatives into a more effective structure. The charters of the Big Four and Willard Electric Cooperatives, among the first three to be issued in Wisconsin, were forfeited to the Secretary of State on January 1, 1938.

While it is true that the organizational beginnings of these early cooperatives were indeed a “work of many hands,” Wallace J. Landry stands out as one of the driving forces behind rural electrification in the county. The speed with which Clark County farmers became acquainted with the REA idea was to a very large extent the accomplishment of Wallace J. Landry, county agricultural agent.

1936–1937				
<b>January 10, 1936</b> – Meeting in Spencer to organize Big Four Cooperative Electrical Association is attended by 300 people.	<b>March 19, 1936</b> – Willard Electric Cooperative organization meeting is held at Willard.	Alfred Herrman, Colby; and Paul Daum, Marshfield, are filed with Wisconsin secretary of state.	<b>April 1, 1937</b> – Clark Electric Cooperative Articles of Incorporation filed with the secretary of state.	
	<b>March 27, 1936</b> – Willard Articles of Incorporation filed with secretary of state. Signers are Martin Klarich, Frank Gosar, C.F. Baldwin, Frank Perovshek Jr., and Martin Matkovitch.	<b>March 24, 1937</b> – Clark Electric Cooperative organizational meeting held in the office of County Agent Wallace Landry in the courthouse in Neillsville. Articles of Incorporation are signed by Herman Blair, Spencer; Ed Luchterhand, Unity; Theodore Humke, Greenwood; Wallace Landry, Neillsville; and Milton Page, Neillsville.		<b>April 12, 1937</b> – First annual meeting of Clark Electric Cooperative held in Loyal. Directors elected are Wallace Landry, L.T. Klein, C.F. Baldwin, Ed Klein, Rex Copper, Gustave Voight, Milton Page, Martin Klarich, and Vern Howard.
	<b>March 30, 1936</b> – Big Four Articles of Incorporation, signed by Otto Prechel, Spencer; Gustave Voight, Unity; Ed Klein, Spencer;			Board authorized to execute a loan contract of \$ 700,000 to build 674 miles of line to serve 2,078 members in Clark, Taylor and Marathon counties. During the first board meeting, Vern Howard is elected president; Martin Klarich, vice president; and Wallace Landry, secretary-treasurer.



*Wallace J. Landry was the driving force behind the organization of Clark Electric Cooperative.*

Landry was immediately attracted to the opportunity of bringing electricity to the farmers. Where he could find an audience or call a meeting, he carried the message about the rural electrification program to the farmers from one corner of the county to the other, night after night, throughout the early years of the REA program.

Rural electrification was more to Landry than simply part of the agricultural extension work to which he was normally assigned. He made it into a crusade for social justice for farm people. He labored far beyond the call of duty on behalf of his self-appointed mission of helping people get electricity. Landry is remembered as the driving force behind the organization of Clark Electric Cooperative. He was the chief organizer of the cooperative and one of its incorporators. During Clark's formative years, he served on the first board of directors, as secretary-treasurer, and as a representative on the board of directors of Wisconsin Power, Dairyland Power and Wisconsin Electric Cooperatives.

The groundwork for the organization of Clark Electric Cooperative had been completed, but a source

of electric power for distribution to its members was yet to be found. Clark Electric Cooperative, along with other newly organized electric cooperatives located in the west central areas of the state, had been negotiating with power companies for wholesale power at a price they could afford to pay. When it became apparent that the power company strategy was to strangle the young co-ops to death with exorbitant wholesale rates, cooperative leadership in Washington, joined by REA personnel, began to discuss the possibility of each cooperative installing its own generating plant, together with transmission and distribution lines. Clark Electric Cooperative was unofficially allocated \$150,000 to be used for this purpose, which was later approved along with the \$700,000 loan application previously submitted to REA.

The newly formed electric cooperatives, upon realizing that they were in a desperate situation in so far as wholesale power was concerned, turned their attention to a proposal that they join together in the organization of a central generating plant to serve them all. Representatives from Clark, Buffalo, Jackson, Dunn, St. Croix, Trempealeau, Pierce-Pepin, Taylor, and Chippewa cooperatives met in Chippewa Falls on Sunday, May 2, 1937. The cooperative leaders promptly organized the Wisconsin Power Cooperative, the first REA-financed power generation and transmission cooperative in the country. The Clark members were quick to grasp the importance of owning and controlling their own power source. At a special membership meeting of the Clark Electric Cooperative membership on May 28, 1937, held in Greenwood, members voted to join the Wisconsin Power Cooperative and elected Wallace Landry to represent them on its board of directors. The diesel generating plant was built in re-

1936-1937

**May 28, 1937** – Thirty charter members of Clark Electric Cooperative meet at Greenwood opera house to authorize joining with other cooperatives in Wisconsin Power Cooperative, the generation and transmission cooperative, which would be their first source of power. (\$150,000 loan previously approved for Clark's own generating plant goes instead to the new cooperative).

**June 26, 1937** – At a meeting in Loyal village hall, members of Big Four and Willard Electric Cooperative vote to sell the assets of their cooperative(s) to Clark Electric Cooperative. Clark board votes to purchase.

**July 15, 1937** – Director C.F. Baldwin hired to secure power line easements at the rate of 50 cents per hour plus 5 cents per mile.

**October 1, 1937** – Board interviews 12 applicants for the job of manager. William A. Dallman is selected. Mr. Dallman becomes Clark Electric Cooperative's first manager.

**December 1937** – By the end of 1937, an office building in Greenwood is rented and Harland Bergemann is hired as the cooperative's first bookkeeper.

MAY  
1937

JUNE  
1937

JULY  
1937

OCTO  
1937

DECE  
1937

cord time north of Chippewa Falls near Eagle Point, and the transmission lines to serve the member cooperatives were rapidly extended. The cost of the plant was expected to be \$400,000 with an additional \$450,000 to construct the necessary 225 miles of transmission lines.

The formation of the Wisconsin Power Cooperative, to provide at last a source of wholesale electricity to the distribution cooperatives in northwestern Wisconsin, speedily eliminated the log jam that had been blocking progress toward actual electrification of the farms for many months. In March 1937, REA announced approval of a \$700,000 loan for the “Clark project.” This was the biggest single loan that had been authorized by REA up to that time.

Membership applications rolled in during the early



*Wisconsin Power Cooperative, which generated the power supplied to Clark Electric's first section of line in 1938, was the first generating cooperative in the nation.*



*Wallace Landry reviews newspaper clippings proclaiming approval of construction loans to Clark Electric in the amount of \$850,000.*

part of 1938. By the end of April, more than 400 names were added to the cooperative's membership list. The members, for the most part, gave their cooperation to the easement solicitors, and the work moved ahead accordingly. During these developments in Clark County, Wisconsin Power Cooperative's generating station was nearing completion. WPC's substation at Longwood, which was to serve the Clark system, was also nearing completion. Farms had begun to be wired and members were becoming impatient for service.

On March 22, 1938, some two weeks after the Chippewa plant was placed in operation, the transmission lines into Longwood substation were completed and the first section of the Clark system was energized. After the switch was thrown and the substation appeared ready for service, Manager Dallman, with C.F. (Curly) Baldwin, began working west, connecting the farms that had been wired and ready for service to the energized lines. The first place they came to was the Arthur Bobb farm, some three miles west of the substation. Meter No. 1 was shoved into the socket. It was not only a joyous moment for the Bobb

**1937-1943**

**April 1, 1937**

Joined Wisconsin Rural Electric Cooperative Association. (WRECA was the first statewide organization formed by electric cooperative organizations.)

APRIL 1937

**March 22, 1938**

First section of Clark distribution system energized. First farm connected is that of Arthur Bobb, Thorp.

MARCH 1938

**December 15, 1940**

*Wisconsin REA News* sent to Clark members for the first time. This is the first statewide magazine/newspaper in the country devoted to electric cooperatives and their members. The magazine started publication July 1940. Manager Dallman's column included November 1939 membership totals: 145 farm consumers, 197 commercial and 14 non-farm. Average kWh use is 67.5 per month.

**January 1941**

Members are reminded the co-op's telephone number, to be called during business hours - 10. Also provided is the manager's number - 94. Members are also told that "if you should forget any of the above, just call the Greenwood operator and she will locate the man on duty."

JAN 1941

**March 4, 1941**

Board approves a one cent per kWh rate for controlled water heaters.

MARCH 1941

family, but for every farm family that was to eventually find reward for its hard work, faith, and patience.

From that moment on, the cooperative considered itself established in business, a business that grew beyond fondest hopes with each succeeding month. During 1939, the directors were required to negotiate a REA loan in the amount of \$99,000 to finance the expansion of the system into other areas of the county. During this time, members were being added to the lines at a rapid pace. On January 8, 1942, the farm of Tom Jicinsky in Eau Pleine township of Marathon County was connected. Mr. Jicinsky became the 2,000th member to receive service from Clark Electric Cooperative.

On November 19, 1941, the board met in a lengthy session to consider the proposition of Wisconsin Power Cooperative consolidating with Tri-State Power Cooperative, which had been organized to serve member systems in southwest Wisconsin, southeast Minnesota, and northeast Iowa. Its steam plant had been built and placed in operation at Genoa on the banks of the Mississippi river south of La Crosse. The two plants were physically tied together by a transmission line for the exchange of power, with both plants by then falling short in meeting the increasing need of the member cooperatives. The proposition gave assurance that economies in operation could be achieved. Directors of Clark Electric Cooperative favored the consolidation, but this action was subject to confirmation of the Clark membership. It was given June 9, 1942, at the annual meeting. Wallace Landry was named director to the proposed consolidated power cooperative.

Wallace Landry was to continue his close association with Clark Electric Cooperative, which grew out of his tireless efforts and human sacrifice into one of the greatest contributing factors to the social and economic welfare of farm families in Clark County history, until he submitted his resignation from the board. His resignation

was read to the members at the seventh annual meeting, June 8, 1943, at Greenwood. It was accepted with regrets expressed by both directors and members.



*Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bobb, seated, lived on the farm that was first to be connected to the energized lines of Clark Electric. Standing behind them are their son and daughter-in-law, Mrs. and Mrs. Kenneth Bobb, and seated in front are their grandchildren Anita, Danny, and Carolyn. Kenneth was elected to the board of directors of Clark Electric Cooperative in 1958 and re-elected to his second three-year term in June 1961. Cruel fate visited the family a month later when he died in a car accident. Mrs. Bobb died a few days later from injuries suffered in the same accident.*

1937-1943

**August 1941**  
Board votes to buy two \$5,000 defense bonds at a cost to the cooperative of \$7,400.

**October 1941**  
"We have just located an outlet for used 32-volt motors," members are informed in the *REA News*. "They are paying from \$2.50 to \$7.00 depending on size, make, and condition."

**February 1942**  
Plans are available at cooperative office for pig brooders, which can be built in the farm shop for less than \$4.00.

**June 1942**  
The amount owed to the cooperative by members more than 60 days delinquent is \$75.06, according to the annual meeting report.

**February 1943**  
*REA News* readers are reminded that Morris Hutt of Abbotsford is buying old light plants and 32-volt motors.

**May 15, 1943**  
Morris Hutt is buying old Briggs & Stratton washing machine motors.

**June 8, 1943**  
Wallace Landry resigns from the board because of illness.

# Growth and Challenges

In the 12 short years since the first REA pole was set in Clark County, Clark Electric Cooperative had made tremendous growth as a business institution. At the end of June 1949, 4,450 connected members were receiving electric service on 1,322 miles of distribution lines. Another 65 miles of line were under construction. The cooperative had members in the five counties of Clark, Taylor, Marathon, Wood, and Chippewa. The rural electrification leadership and members had overcome tremendous obstacles to get to this point. The following are some of the more contentious obstacles the cooperatives endured.

## Spite Lines and Wild Rumors

One such obstacle involved Willard Electric Cooperative (incorporated March 27, 1936, and later consolidated with Clark Electric Cooperative on June 26, 1937). Willard Electric Cooperative held its first annual meeting in Willard on June 13, 1936. It proved to be a meeting that tested the mettle of the farmers of the community. Northern States Power Company had moved into the area and had proposed to cut three miles of heavily saturated membership out of the very core of the cooperative's organizational structure. Discussion was heated, but opposition rallied against the private utility's invasion. There were some who ridiculed the idea that a cooperative could do a job that private utility companies never cared to do before REA. A vote was taken on whether to turn the job over to Northern States Power or to stick with the cooperative. The decision of the members was to stick with the cooperative.

Spite lines and misleading propaganda were major obstacles that also had to be overcome by the early cooperatives in Clark County. One "spite line" started by the

power company east from Owen was nipped in the bud when farmers refused service from the power company, which was suddenly offered on drastically liberalized terms compared with the company's extension policies of just a few months before.

Construction of another spite line was started outside of Greenwood at night. But cooperative leaders were caught off guard only momentarily. County Agent Wallace Landry called a meeting of farmers in the area, where it was revealed that the power company was refunding the membership fees in the cooperative that had been paid by the farmers. The farmers stuck fast to the cooperative when they learned that it was still in business after all, and they determined to go ahead with construction of a cooperative project.



*This picture was identified in a 1949 history book as one of the many carloads of power line poles that had been set into more than 1,300 miles of co-op lines since construction started in 1937. The distinctive "black jack" poles—southern pine permeated full-length with creosote—were introduced into general use for power lines by the REA program and became almost a trademark of REA-financed lines. Out of more than 30,000 poles that had been set by Clark Electric to the date of this book (1949), only one "black jack" pole was found to have rotted.*





*Hugo Halle, a Town of York farmer, was featured in the September 1945 issue of the Wisconsin REA News after becoming the 3,000th member connected to Clark Electric Co-op lines. Riding a horse named Cap, he put on a good show for the REA News photographer.*

The power company was forced to back a long way down in another spite line attempt east of Spencer. The power company set a line of poles to two customers, right past several members of the cooperative. The cooperative members refused to desert, and the cooperative built its line right alongside that of the power company. The company finally pulled out its poles just before the cooperative line was energized.

Many stories were circulated, with the aim of breaking down the farmers' faith in the cooperative leadership and the REA program. Although not a single dollar was ever paid to the volunteer canvassers who spent many days and drove many miles in their automobiles to sign up members, the charge was frequently whispered that the canvassers were getting a liberal cut out of the membership fee.

The cooperative's opponents also tried to frighten farmers out of the cooperative by telling them the government would mortgage their farms as security for the REA loan to the cooperative, although the fact is, and always

has been, that the cooperative members' only liability for the debts of the cooperative is the amount they invested in the form of the membership fee and any capital credits that they have earned (equity).

The argument most frequently raised against the REA program in the early days was that farmers could not use and pay for enough electricity to keep the rural electric cooperatives going. Even the people who should have been in the best position to know maintained that rural electrification would not work. Leading electric utility company executives asserted, when only one farm in 10 was electrified, that "there are very few farms needing electricity for major farm operations that are not now served." That same argument was used repeatedly through the years in an attempt to influence Congress to scale down or eliminate appropriations for the Rural Electrification Administration. Many of the farmers themselves and their neighbors in rural communities, with the experience of rock-bottom depression very close behind them, were not at all confident that farmers could successfully take on the obligation of another monthly bill to pay. Fortunately, the power company executives were wrong. The REA program remains one of the most successful programs ever created in our country.

## Clark Electric Cooperative's Attorney Authors Famous Rush Law

A law hailed as a Magna Charta for Wisconsin's Electric Cooperatives was written and sponsored in 1937 by Senator Walter Rush of Neillsville. Mr. Rush had represented the 24<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Senatorial District (Clark, Taylor, and Wood Counties) in the Wisconsin Senate for 12 years and six consecutive sessions, from 1929 through 1939, inclusive. This placed him in a position to be of great service to the electric cooperatives of our state during their formative years. He responded by authoring

1945-1949			1945-1949		
<p><b>September 20, 1944</b> Secretary of Agriculture Claude Wickard is the featured speaker at a meeting of the Board of Directors of Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (then the name of the state association of electric cooperatives).</p>	<p><b>September 1945</b> Hugo Halle, a Town of York farmer, was the 3,000 member connected to Clark Electric Co-operative lines.</p>	<p><b>June 1946</b> Annual Meeting action includes authorization to explore the possibility of providing telephone service.</p>	<p><b>June 1947</b> Greenwood Common Council presented the cooperative the deed to a site for a new headquarters building.</p>	<p><b>June 1949</b> New headquarters building ready for occupancy.</p>	<p><b>July 27-28, 1949</b> Headquarters building dedication at Greenwood.</p>

perhaps the most important piece of legislation in the history of the rural electrification program.

The Rush Act, as it was known, was simple but sweeping in its terms. It substantially ended private utility spite lines and wholesale territorial pirating and cherry-picking efforts. It served as the legislative base upon which many early cooperatives were able to build sound and feasible projects largely free from utility company's break-up efforts, which prior to the passage of the act had seriously hampered cooperative feasibility and growth.

Under the Rush Act, a cooperative could protect its proposed service area from power company invasion for six months by filing a service area map with the Public Service Commission. If within that period a loan from REA was approved, the protection was extended a year from the date of the loan approval.

The Rush Act was the first and only state legislative act of its exact kind in the United States designed to meet the serious problem of spite lines and territorial pirating. Private utility opponents immediately charged that it was manifestly unconstitutional, but it was never challenged in court and private utilities complied with its terms with few notable exceptions. The Rush Act very substantially accomplished the job for which it was intended.

In the silver anniversary history of Clark Electric Cooperative, Attorney Floyd Wheeler of Madison wrote that "members and directors of rural electric cooperatives in Wisconsin owe a very real debt of gratitude to Senator Walter Rush for his vision, courage, and legislative leadership."

Walter Rush served as Clark Electric Cooperative's attorney from the outset until the late '50s, when ill health forced him to retire.

*"Modern, automatic office machinery" was used in the general office of the new headquarters building to assist in handling the accounts of 4,450 member-patrons in 1949. Left to right are Dorothy Denk, Della Martin, Winona Roohr, Bernita Lueck, and Marjorie Panzenhagen.*



*Pictured in characteristic pose of attention to every word spoken at an annual meeting of Clark Electric Cooperative is Walter J. Rush, highly respected Neillsville attorney and former state senator. Rush served as legal counsel for the cooperative from its very beginning until ill health forced his retirement in the late 1950s. He died on April 16, 1961. Pictured at the microphone is Gustave H. Voight, who served on the board of directors from 1937 to 1944. This picture was taken at the 1944 annual meeting as he submitted his resignation as director and president to the membership, to conform with the co-op's bylaws that allowed no director to seek public office. Voight made an unsuccessful race for Clark County assemblyman that year.*

## Farm Use of Electricity Upsets All Predictions

The Rural Electrification Administration in the early days emphasized that electricity must be used as an income-producing or cost-reducing tool in farm production, and not simply as a convenience of the home. REA emphasized that rates must be low enough and so designed that they would encourage farmers to use large amounts of electricity in order to reduce the unit cost.

In accordance with that philosophy, REA systems were originally designed for an average consumption of 80 kWh per month, exactly double the monthly minimum bill established for 40 kWh per month. Many skeptics doubted that most of the farmers would ever be able to use up the 40 kWh per month minimum let alone double that amount. In examining proposed projects to determine whether there was a reasonable expectation that loans could be retired on schedule, REA originally used the basis of an anticipated average monthly consumption of 50 to 60 kWh per month. These were the figures that seemed



*The advantages and efficiencies of the new headquarters building in Greenwood, completed and occupied in May 1949 and dedicated the following July 27-28, was a stepping stone to continuing progress for the cooperative and its total service operations. Since then, three additions have been made and a separate building has been added to the cooperative complex.*

extremely “overly-optimistic” and “visionary” to many of the early critics of the REA program.

The critics couldn’t have been more wrong. According to the 1949 history book, just 12 short years of operation had shown that even the expectations of REA planners were ridiculously conservative. The monthly consumption of electricity for each member during 1949 averaged more than two and one-half times the 80 kWh that REA originally visualized. The average consumption per member was 195 kWh in December of 1948, and the average bill per member that month was \$7.28. It was noted that “there is no indication that the growing use of electricity by the farmer members of the cooperative is ready to stop, or even about ready to start leveling off.”

Just how, and why, did the electric power industry, the government, and even the farmers themselves, so completely misjudge the farmer’s ability to make use of electric power? Before the rural electrification program started, people had the habit of regarding electricity as a convenience at best, if not a downright luxury. It was a habit of thought that was developed before ways had been found to produce electricity cheaply. The rate policies of the day created a vicious cycle of high rates, which discouraged heavy consumption, keeping the cost of production per kWh sold high, which in turn justified the high rates served to reinforce the public attitude toward using electricity after it had actually been outdated by new technical developments. The REA tried a new approach, based on the theory that if the price of electricity were low enough, farmers would use so much that the average cost per kWh sold could be held down to a low figure.

In the early days of rural electrification, most farmers thought of using electricity primarily for electric lights and for a few simple appliances such as radios, washing machines, electric irons, and perhaps a hot plate. Many farmers also wanted to use electricity to replace a gasoline engine or worn-out windmill for pumping water. Some day, when times got better, these early members



**1949 Board of Directors**—Seated, left to right: L.T. Klein, Owen; John Barth, Thorp; Vern G. Howard, president, Granton; and Rex Copper, secretary-treasurer, Withee. Standing, left to right: George Humke, Greenwood; Mike Krultz, Sr., Willard; Ed Klein, vice president, Spencer; and W.G. Gerhardt, Neillsville. The ninth director, Charles Witt, Abbotsford was not present. Up to this point six other men served on the board of directors since it was organized: Wallace J. Landry, who became an agricultural instructor at Port Wing, and C.F. Baldwin, who became manager of Richland Electric Cooperative in Richland Center. One of the former directors, Martin Klarich, who was first president of the Willard Electric Cooperative during early REA organizational days, died several years before this picture was taken. Other cooperative members who helped guide its swift progress as members of the board were J.H. Langfeldt, Greenwood; S. J. Plautz, Willard; and Gustave Voight, Loyal.

hoped to have electric stoves, water heaters, electric pressure water systems, vacuum cleaners, a refrigerator, and various table appliances such as toasters and food mixers.

But what the commercial power industry completely failed to realize, and many of the cooperative leaders and farmers were able only to guess, was that low-cost electric power was about to make sweeping changes in farm living and farming methods on a scale as great as the introduction of the plow several centuries ago, and the tractor after World War I.



**1949 Line Crew**—Front row, left to right: Glen Drew, Robert Englebretson, Robert Schneider, Leonard Vogler, Lewis Walde, and Dave Thwing. Center: John Korenchan, Alfred Zillmer, Oscar Brandt, Ervin Geizler, Alex Poznanski, Eugene Bombach, and Ervin Buker. Back row: Robert Speich, Anthony Rychnoosky, Leon Kuester, Lex Dusso, Hugh Severson, Harold Blaasch, and Frank Buyak. Ray Arndt and John Mortel, janitor, are not pictured.

The experience of one of the members of Clark Electric Cooperative is a perfect illustration of how cooperative electricity changed the farming industry. This farmer bought a milking machine during the 1920s. It was a good machine. But it did not work out very well. The gasoline engine that was used for power caused a lot of trouble, and even when it worked, it did not provide satisfactory power. Eventually, the farmer concluded it was more trouble to make the milking machine do the job than it was to milk the cows by hand. So he stuck the milking machine away in a corner of the barn and went back to the old hand method. When the farm was electrified by the cooperative, this member decided to resurrect the old milking machine and give it another try. He bought a new motor and scrubbed up the milker. It worked so well and so conveniently with electricity that the same old machine has been doing the milking on the farm ever since. (Excerpt from 1949).

Millions of farmers throughout America were making this discovery for themselves, as were the members of Clark Electric Cooperative. They began using electricity for uses that few of them dreamed of when they first heard about the rural electrification program. As the age of electrified agriculture dawned, the unpredicted and still unpredictable increase in farmers' uses for electric power gave rise to another obstacle for electric cooperatives at this stage of their development: expanding power production and distribution facilities swiftly enough to keep pace with the rapidly increasing needs of cooperative members. In order to meet this challenge, Clark Electric Co-



*Pictured above is part of the crowd of 1,100 that attended the 1949 annual meeting of Clark Electric Cooperative in the Greenwood High School on June 14. A history book noted that annual meetings were always well attended, with Clark Electric's membership among "the most alert" of any cooperative in the state.*

operative increased capacity of wires, continued to build infrastructure, and shorted line extensions to decrease the number of farmers served on each individual section line.

Likewise, Dairyland Power Cooperative had been increasing its power generation capacity at a break-neck pace ever since the war. As the 1949 report highlights, "The power supply problem is far from solved yet; Dairyland is barely caught up with the present demand. Construction of two new plants in Wisconsin, a hydro-electric power dam on the Flambeau River near Ladysmith, Wis., and a steam generating station along the Mississippi River at Cassville, in Grant County, is running a close race with the increasing consumption of its farmer members. The farmers themselves know that they can't afford to slack up in the race for adequate power supplies, and they are determined to push their cooperatively owned power generation and transmission program forward just as fast as the demand increases."

## Cooperation Brings Some Changes into Farm Electric Rates

Rates for Farm Electric Service Charged by Commercial Utility Company Immediately Before Establishment of the Rural Electrification Administration as Compared with Rates Adopted by Clark Electric Cooperative When First Energized.

	Minimum Charges		15	25	40	100	150	250	500	1000
	Amount	KWH Included	KWH	KWH	KWH	KWH	KWH	KWH	KWH	KWH
Northern States Power Co.*	\$3.00 to 4.50	0	\$4.01 to 5.55	\$4.69 to 6.25	\$5.70 to 7.30	\$8.13 to 9.90	\$10.48 to 11.40	\$14.18 to 15.40	\$20.93 to 22.90	\$35.43 to 38.90
Clark Electric Cooperative**	\$3.50	40	\$3.50	\$3.50	\$3.50	\$5.90	\$6.90	\$8.53	\$11.65	\$17.90

\*From Federal Power Commission Electric Rate Survey, Rate Series No. 8, Feb. 1, 1935. Figures are Net Monthly Charges based on 4 customers per mile. Farm rates varied from one area to another within the ranges shown.

\*\*Rates Adopted by Cooperative Board of Directors Dec. 31, 1937 and in force until 1948.

## Eventful Happenings 1944 – 1949

The time period between 1944 and 1949 was an eventful one for Clark Electric Cooperative. The directors voted to join with other electric cooperatives of the state and nation in asking Congress to extend the amortization period on REA loans from 20 to 35 years, and fix the interest rate on such loans at 2 percent. A \$75,000 loan application from Clark Electric was approved but later rescinded and combined with a subsequent application, both totaling \$285,000. REA approved the loan in this amount, which was used for the construction of 129 miles of line to serve 540 new members. Later in that same year, other loan requests of \$86,000 and \$175,000 were applied for to finance line construction and system improvements.

During this period, the board gave preliminary discussion to the construction of a new headquarters building that would meet the expanding needs of the operating personnel. Business interests of Greenwood, Withee, and Loyal began to promote sites for the proposed building in their respective villages. A majority of the board voted in favor of keeping the cooperative headquarters in Greenwood. Application was then made to REA for a \$50,000 preliminary building loan. By 1948, final plans and specifications for the new headquarters building were approved

## How the Cooperative Membership Has Grown

1938	1,178
1939	1,335
1940	1,658
1941	1,981
1942	2,170
1943	2,298
1944	2,686
1945	3,096
1946	3,484
1947	3,878
1948	4,313
1949	4,450

(by June 30, 1949)

by the board. A loan application for \$110,000 to finance construction of the building was executed by the board of directors.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Clark Electric Cooperative was held at Greenwood June 14, 1949. Attendance dropped from the all-time high of the previous year (437 members) to 401 members present. On July 27-28, 1949, Clark Electric Cooperative new headquarters building was dedicated.

## Clark Electric Cooperative Opens Appliance Department

One of the major decisions reached by the board of directors during late 1951 was one that launched the cooperative into a large-scale appliance merchandising business. This

development was followed by the execution of a retail appliance franchise and a search for an appliance salesman. In October 1952, Donald Fontaine joined the cooperative's staff as appliance salesman. New policies to govern the operation of the appliance sales department had been adopted by the board, which set the stage for the department's phenomenal growth not only in sales volume but in a highly valuable member service.

One of the basic requirements of the appliance department was that it must be self supporting. While it is true that electric appliance sales build load, which in turn creates a revenue stream that contributes toward the reduced cost of providing electric service to the members, the department, from the very beginning, was never regarded merely as a vehicle for load building alone. Its ba-

### 1951–2012 APPLIANCE DEPARTMENT EVOLUTION

**Fall 1951**  
Board of Directors decides to launch the cooperative into a large-scale appliance merchandising business.

**October 1952**  
Donald Fontaine joined the cooperative's staff as appliance salesman.

**January 13, 1994**  
The Articles of Incorporation of Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite, Inc. were filed with the Secretary of State. The "appliance department" had now grown into its own separate business as a wholly owned subsidiary of Clark Electric Cooperative. The original incorporators were Louis Dux – Neillsville, Richard Eibergen – Granton, Stanley Schultz – Colby, Robert Will – Colby, John Reinart – Neillsville, Ronald Baxter – Owen, LeRoy Fravert Jr. – Loyal, Ralph Woik – Owen, Richard Alder – Greenwood, and Anthony Jarocki – Withee.

**1994**  
CEAS introduces First Call Medical Monitoring. First Call promotes independent living amongst senior citizens and homebound customer

**July 2000**  
DirecTV subscriber base peaks at 7,720.

**2005**  
Wildblue (high-speed Internet access via satellite) is introduced.

**August 2011**  
DirecTV relationship formally ends.

**March 2012**  
EXEDE is introduced. This is the next generation high-speed Internet via satellite product.

sic business philosophy consisted of quality merchandise, reasonable prices, and member service second to none.

Mr. Fontaine began his sales program by first building confidence and acceptance within the membership. Night after night he conducted demonstrations in school houses and town halls, three and four nights a week. He set out to prove that electric cooking was convenient and costs less than cooking with any other type fuel. He

metered the cost of competitive fuels to prove his claim and won over many housewives with the ease of cooking with electricity. Among the benefits derived from the mounting sales to the members was volume buying, which meant more reasonable prices. It also meant the addition of a salesman and three appliance servicemen to the department. When asked what lay ahead for the appliance department, Mr. Fontaine replied, “Electric living will be-

## Mascot Madness

Clyde Ellis, first general manager of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), called the 1950s legal challenge mounted by for-profit utilities “the most vicious thing that the rural electric systems have yet encountered.” That was saying a mouthful, since by that time electric co-ops had already weathered two decades of economic, political, and industry obstacles to staying in business.

People who knew him have told me that Ellis, who retired from NRECA 40 years ago, rarely passed an opportunity to rally his co-op members against any foe of cooperative rural electrification. If he had to embellish things a bit to whip up the troops...well, it was for a noble cause.

The lawsuit Ellis hyped in the above quote didn’t involve territorial takeovers, regulatory obstructionism, or discriminatory business practices – all of which had earlier prompted calls to action by Ellis and the national organization. No, it was the use of Willie Wirehand, the co-op’s cartoon mascot, that was in peril.

### Court Contestants

A coalition of 109 private power companies who had their own mascot—Reddy Kilowatt—sued NRECA and Mid-Carolina Electric Co-op, alleging trademark infringement and unfair competition. Filed in 1953, the lawsuit spanned 3-1/2 years, and ran up untold lawyer fees on its way through two federal courts, and was finally decided some 55 years ago last month.

The court noted the co-op’s Willie—with his light-socket head, wire body, electrical-plug feet, and lineman’s gloves—was sufficiently distinguishable from

the power companies’ lightning-bolt torsoed Reddy Kilowatt, though that wasn’t the core legal point in dispute. Rather the investor-owned utilities (IOUs) had complained that Willie’s postures and situation—posting next to an array of appliances and engaging in other electricity uses—were so similar to the stances depicted by Reddy Kilowatt that the public was somehow being confused.

The judge pointed out the IOUs had used Reddy in “thousands of poses doing almost everything humanly possible,” and that an exclusive right to such portrayals would effectively preempt *anybody* from marketing electricity. In the interests of preventing such marketing monopolization, he brought the gavel down in favor of the co-ops, paving the way for Willie to be trademarked and put into broader use.

### Popular Plug

Reddy Kilowatt, an icon of the IOUs since 1926, gradually faded in popularity among electric companies. He was resurrected in 1998 when Northern States Power Company (NSP) bought exclusive rights to the figure, a move to bolster its marketing at a time when U.S. electric utilities widely anticipated deregulation. Reddy Kilowatt soon found himself cast

aside when deregulation fizzled, along with marketing strategies designed to promote retail competition among electricity vendors.

Willie, on the other hand, continues to be a popular spokesperson among electric co-ops. Willie’s legal victory a half-century ago continues to inspire electric co-ops as they deal with entrenched businesses that stand in the way of affordable, quality services for rural areas.—Perry Baird (February 2007 WECN)



come more and more the ruling force to our lives, whether along main street or a rural route. Electric heating and air conditioning will one day be commonplace in most every home. The day is not far off when electric ovens will be perfected and economized within reach of most every pocketbook. Dish washers, clothes washers, and clothes dryers will become as usual in rural homes as ranges and television are today.” (From 1967 history book).

History proved Mr. Fontaine correct. As the years passed, the department grew and expanded its product offerings. On January 13, 1994, the Articles of Incorporation of Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite, Inc. were filed with the secretary of state. The “appliance department” had now grown into its own separate business as a wholly owned subsidiary of Clark Electric Cooperative. The original incorporators were Louis Dux – Neillsville, Richard Eibergen – Granton, Stanley Schultz – Colby, Robert Will – Colby, John Reinart – Neillsville, Ronald Baxter – Owen, LeRoy Fravert Jr. – Loyal, Ralph Woik – Owen, Richard Alder – Greenwood, and Anthony Jarocki – Withee.

One of the primary purposes of Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite Inc. was to provide satellite television (DirecTV) service to our rural areas. Many of you may recall that prior to the launch of DirecTV the majority of the rural area used rabbit ears and had to accept just our local channels. Today it is rare to see a home in rural America that does not have the little dish mounted to it. The success of the satellite product line exceeded all expectations. Our customer base peaked in 2000 with more than 7,720 subscribers. To put that in perspective, Clark Electric Cooperative served 7,957 electric accounts that year. Unfortunately, after being able to provide this service for some 17 years, DirecTV elected to expire the servicer agreement that allowed Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite Inc to service DirecTV accounts. Our relationship with DirecTV formally ended in August of 2011.

WildBlue, (a high-speed Internet access via satellite system) was first introduced to the marketplace in 2005. Since the initial offering, response has been strong. Now, in 2012, the next generation of high-speed Internet was offered. EXEDE, powered by ViaSat, is true high-speed satellite Internet that offers up to 12 MBPS download speed.

First Call Medical Monitoring System was first introduced in 1994 and has promoted independent living amongst senior citizens and homebound customers.



*Pictured at left is a modern-day kitchen in 1952. This was one of the “eye-appealing corners” of the co-op’s showroom at the headquarters building. Pictured above is Clark Electric’s 1952 appliance department personnel. From left to right are Ralph Landini, salesman; Richard Syth and John Zagozen, appliance servicemen; and Henry Janezich, apprentice serviceman.*

CEAS continues to offer HVAC installations and appliance sales and service.

## Capital Credit Retirements Begin

Like other REA-financed electric cooperatives starting out in the late 1930s, Clark Electric Cooperative at the outset was almost 100 percent debt financed. Members were not required to furnish capital for a down payment, but only to pay a token membership fee. As a rural electric cooperative member, you are part owner of Clark Electric Cooperative. Basically, you’ve pooled your money with thousands of other members and created equity for your rural electric cooperative to deliver you electricity and to provide services at an affordable cost.

As a locally owned business, Clark Electric Cooperative is committed to the people, businesses, and communities we serve. Because we are member owned and operated, one of the fundamental principles we follow is a commitment to returning your investment. This is done in the form of capital credits. Since Clark Electric Cooperative operates on a not-for-profit basis, we return margins to members and former members through the capital credit allocation and retirement process. The amount returned is in relation to the individual member’s transactions with the cooperative.

In short, members receive a vital resource, electricity, from a business owned and operated by you, your friends, and neighbors. Working together, Clark Electric Cooperative strives to provide you with the highest level of service possible while striving to keep electric bills affordable.

Clark Electric Cooperative began the retirement of capital credits in 1959 in the amount of \$2,176.18. By comparison, during 2011 the cooperative retired \$762,029 to members, which brings the total capital credits retired as of year end 2011 to \$18,292,858.

## Miss Rural Electrification Contest Clark Produced More "Miss" Winners Than Any Other Wisconsin Cooperative

The "Miss" contest was a most visible feature of electric cooperatives annual meetings at the local, state, and national levels for many years. Clark was one of the first in Wisconsin to get into the program and was the last to drop it, and produced more winners than any other Wisconsin cooperative.



*Sandy Meissner went all the way to the top two ways during the 1968 NRECA annual meeting in Dallas. She met President Lyndon Johnson and won first place in the national "Miss" contest.*

One who went all the way to the top was Sandy Meissner of Chili, who served a year as Miss Rural Electrification after winning the national contest in Dallas in 1968. Winners at the state level were Jane Ellen Loos, Susan Schraufnagel, and Deborah Freidenfels. Janet went on to win the first runner-up spot in the national contest in 1966. Janet Smith, first runner-up in the state contest in 1973, became Miss Wisconsin Rural Electrification before the year was out when the first-place winner resigned.

A roll call of all who held the title of Miss Clark Rural Electrification follows:

Jane Ellen Loos, Colby, 1964  
 Mary Ann Wojtkiewicz, Thorp, 1965  
 Beverly Schoenherr, Neillsville, 1967  
 Diane Bender, Colby, 1968\*  
 Susan Schraufnagel, Colby, 1968  
 Wendy Gardner, Greenwood, 1969  
 Sandra Smith, Granton, 1970  
 Denise Loucks, Abbotsford, 1971  
 Janet Lee Smith, Granton, 1972  
 Deborah Friedenfels, Withee, 1973  
 Lynette Will, Colby, 1974  
 Tammy Tyznik, Colby, 1975  
 Diane Havlicek, Neillsville, 1976  
 Anita Courchaine, Abbotsford, 1977  
 Terri Gerrits, Thorp, 1978  
 Suzanne Mohan, Colby, 1979

\* Diane Bender, who had won runner up in the local contest, replaced Beverly Schoenherr in the state contest in 1968.

### 1953-1962

#### March 28, 1953

2,000 people attend cooperative sponsored radio broadcast originating in Greenwood and broadcast over WKOW Madison, WEAU Eau Claire and WCTH Shawano.

#### June 9, 1953

Wallace Landry returns to Greenwood to participate in the annual meeting program.

#### June 1954

Member Approval is given to a proposed bylaw change that would prohibit a director from serving more than two consecutive terms.

#### June 1955

Two-term director limitation is approved, to take effect immediately.

#### June 12, 1956

Numerous bylaw changes are approved routinely. A district committeeman conference plan for the nomination of directors is rejected. Heated discussion is held over use of cooperative funds for organization of a telephone cooperative. (The 1967 history reports that the meeting was of "unprecedented length," and "a few hundred dairy cows were late in being milked that evening.")





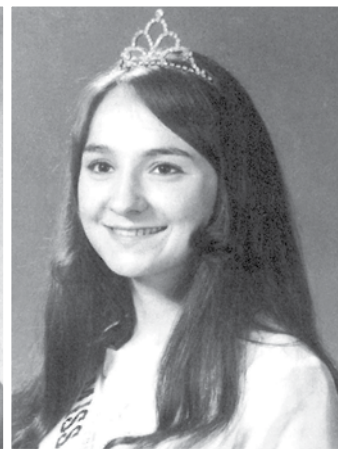
Jane Ellen Loos



Susan Schraufnagel



Deborah Freidenfels



Janet Smith

The board of directors voted in June 1979 to drop the contest. The reasons given in the *Wisconsin REC News* were changing times, higher costs, and the fact that the state and national contests had been dropped four years earlier.

### Cooperative 20-Year Anniversary

The completion of the 20th anniversary year of the cooperative was observed at the annual meeting on June 11, 1957, at the high school auditorium in Greenwood. The observance of this historical milestone was attended by a moment of regret, in that it terminated the tenure of Ed Klein as a member of the board of directors. He became ineligible for re-election under restrictions amended into the bylaws of the cooperative at the 1955 annual meeting.

His long and notable career with the rural electrification program began as a member of the board of directors, and as secretary–treasurer of the Big Four Cooperative Electrical Association, which was organized in January 1936. With the organization of Clark Electric Cooperative, which subsequently consolidated with Big Four, Mr. Klein was elected to its first board of directors. He served continuously as a director from March of 1937 into the cooperative’s 21st year, serving since 1944 as its vice president. He succeeded Wallace Landry on the board of directors of Wisconsin Electric Cooperative in 1943, an office he held without interruption into 1957. During his director tenure on the WEC board, he also served as an outstanding member of its Executive Committee and Public Relations Committee. Ed Klein was recognized and held in high esteem as a dedicated participant in all WEC

1953–1962

#### June 1957

Pioneer Director Ed Klein leaves the board, ineligible to serve under bylaw limitation on tenure. His service dates back to the Big Four Electric cooperative, organized in 1936, and he was also a charter director of Clark Electric Cooperative. At this meeting, women are nominated for the first time to represent Clark Electric Cooperative of affiliated organizations: Mrs. Al Spiegel, Jr., Mrs. Frank Neubecker, Barbara Crockett, and Mrs. Ethel Schuette.

#### June 1958

Pioneer Director Vern G. Howard leaves the board, ineligible to serve under bylaw limitation on tenure. He was elected to the first board of directors and served as its first president. He also served on the Dairyland Power Cooperatives Board of Directors from 1943 to 1966.

#### June 1961

(Annual Meeting)  
Members vote to increase ceiling on REA loans from \$ 3 million to \$ 5 million

#### November 1961

Board votes to purchase Lex Dusso residential property (to be site of auditorium) for \$7,500.

#### June 1962

(25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Meeting) Governor Gaylord Nelson is featured speaker.

JUN 1957

JUN 1958

JUNE 1961

NOVEMBER 1961

JUNE 1962

board and committee meetings. His strong cooperative influence and sincerity, which became the basis for his every decision, will long be remembered by both the directors and employees of the statewide organization.

The continuous service of another pioneer director was interrupted when Vern G. Howard became ineligible for re-election to the board at the 1958 annual meeting. Mr. Howard was elected to the first board of directors of Clark Electric on April 12, 1937, and on the same date was elected the cooperative's first president. His term as president was interrupted on several occasions during his initial tenure. As president he served from 1937 to 1939, from 1940 to 1943, and from 1944 until his tenure as director ended with the 1958 annual meeting. He also served the cooperative as vice president for the 1939–1940 term and the 1943-1944 term. With the 1962 annual meeting, Mr. Howard was again elected to the board of directors. Vern Howard's active participation in the rural electrification program reached into the areas of affiliate cooperatives. He served as Clark Electric's director on the board of Dairyland Power Cooperative from 1943 to 1966, and during the formative years of the statewide organization he served on its all important legislative committee in Madison.



*The limited tenure of directors also interrupted the continuous service of Vern G. Howard on the board of Clark Electric at the 1958 annual meeting after 21 years of service in the offices of president and vice president. He also served for 23 continuous years as Clark's director on the board of Dairyland Power Cooperative and was one of the original members of the statewide association's Legislative Committee during a crucial time for electric co-ops in the Wisconsin legislature.*



*At the co-op's 25th anniversary annual meeting in 1962, the first manager was still on the job and was to continue until August 1964 before retiring. W.A. (Bill) Dallman is pictured with Governor Gaylord Nelson (left), annual meeting speaker. Dallman's retirement years included a stint as interim manager of Buffalo Electric Co-op, which served the Mississippi River home to which Bill and his wife, Lucille, had moved after his retirement. Later they moved to Brandon, Florida, where Bill passed away in 1971 at age 75.*

*The observance of the co-op's 20th anniversary was attended by a moment of regret in that it terminated the tenure of Ed Klein as a member of the board of directors since its organization. His strong cooperative influence and sincerity became the basis for every decision that he exercised as a director, and as the co-op's representative on the statewide board and its various committees.*



# Construction & Expansion

## Cooperative Complex in Greenwood Grows

**A**t the November 1961 Board of Directors meeting, the board voted to purchase the Lex Dusso residential property south of and adjacent to the headquarters building site located in Greenwood. The price was \$7,500, with Mr. Dusso required to raze and remove the residence and garage located on the property. The plan had already been discussed and approved to build a separate building within the cooperative's complex. The new building would contain a community auditorium and give much needed space for the constantly growing appliance merchandising business.

During the October 6, 1962, board meeting, the directors voted to engage the services of Donn Hougen Architects, Inc., of Marshfield to prepare and present to the board plans for a separate building to house an auditorium, garage, appliance display area, and storage space for appliances and line materials. Later, the board approved a change in plans that would strengthen the substructure to provide a fall-out shelter in the entire basement area (keep in mind this was at the height of the Cold War). At a special board meeting held on July 15, 1963, final plans and specifications for the new building were submitted, discussed, and approved by the directors. The architects were authorized to advertise for bids.

Manager Dallman and his key personnel were charged with the responsibility of supervising the extensive project. In the meantime, Bill Dallman was rounding out 25 years of

service to Clark Electric Cooperative and its membership. He set his retirement date for July 1, 1964. During the June 9, 1964, annual meeting, a well-earned tribute was paid to Bill by the membership and guest speakers attending that meeting. Tributes to his enviable record as manager of the cooperative, through its infancy into one of the largest and strongest electric cooperatives in the state, were spoken by Vern Howard, on behalf of the board. High tribute was also paid to him by Floyd D. Wheeler, the cooperative's attorney and veteran legal counselor for



*The second structure in the co-op complex in Greenwood contains the auditorium, appliance display and storage space, and garage area, with the basement designed as a fall-out shelter. At left is the public's main entrance to the auditorium, completed in 1964. The auditorium proved to be one of the co-op's best investments in community relations. A 1967 tally counted some 20 local and county organizations using the auditorium for a total of 129 specific events, in addition to co-op events.*

electric cooperatives throughout the state; Tom Gray, assistant general manager of Dairyland Power Cooperative; and Harvey Schermerhorn, director of public relations for Wisconsin Electric Cooperative.

In order to fulfill his commitments to Clark Electric Cooperative, Bill remained on the job until the following August 1, 1964, in order to supervise construction of the new building through to its completion. It was most appropriate that the first use of the new auditorium section of the building was put to the farewell party to honor Bill and Lucille Dallman. The cooperative's gift to Bill was an electric welder, which he fitted into immediate use in his workshop that was built along with the Dallmans' new home on the banks of the Mississippi at Buffalo City. His retirement, however, was not to be a fixed pattern of life for him. When Buffalo Electric Cooperative, located at Alma, just upstream a few miles from the Dallman home needed a new acting manager, the directors prevailed upon Bill to take over the job temporarily.

## Yes, I Remember

By Bill Dallman

For the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet, Manager Dallman recited some of his memories that came out of the 25 years of service he gave to Clark Electric Cooperative. Mr. Dallman served as Clark Electric Cooperative's first general manager from 1937–1964. The following is an excerpt from that 1962 article.

"..... I feel certain that some of you present day



*"To W.A. Dallman in recognition of his distinguished and faithful service as manager of Clark Electric Cooperative, Greenwood, Wisconsin, October 25, 1937 – July 1, 1964" was the inscription on the silver tray presented to Dallman (right) by veteran director Vern G. Howard at the 1964 annual meeting, upon announcement of Dallman's retirement.*

members can remember what farming was like prior to that historic date of March 22, 1938. If you do remember, then only you can tell the youth of today what cooperative power has really done for agriculture and the rural families of America. Many of those young people are going to seriously doubt what you tell them. But if you can convince them that you are speaking of an era of farm life when electric service was actually unheard of by the vast majority of rural people, then perhaps they will gain some appreciation of the importance of this cooperative. The

### 1962/1969

**October 6, 1962** – Board votes to engage Donn Hougen Architects to prepare plans for building to house auditorium, garage, appliance display area and storage.

**July 15, 1963** – (Special Meeting) Board approves plans for new building.

**June 1964** – (Annual Meeting) W.A. (Bill) Dallman is honored for his many years of service as manager. Speakers include Attorney Floyd Wheeler, Madison, and Tom Gray, Assistant General Manager of Dairyland Power Cooperative, La Crosse. (Bill's retirement date was set at July 1 but he continued until August 1 to supervise construction of new auditorium building. His retirement at Buffalo City, Wisconsin was to be interrupted by a stint as acting manager of Buffalo Electric Cooperative, Alma. He died May 22, 1971 at Brandon, Florida).

**August 1, 1964** – H.M. Bergemann becomes Cooperative's second General Manager. Mr. Bergemann has been on staff since 1938 as bookkeeper and office manager. In Mr. Bergemann's first Managers Report (September 1964 *Wisconsin Energy News*) Mr. Bergemann says, "All I can say is that I will try to maintain the same progress and to give the best service possible at the lowest possible cost. I hope that all members honestly feel this is their cooperative and will come in whenever they have a problem we can help with. We are here to serve you to the best of our ability."

**July 1966** – Rate reduction on small commercial accounts announced in the *R.E.C. News*.

**January 24, 1967** – Worst ice storm in 20 years hits area. Most of crew works 36 straight hours without sleep.

**June 1967** – Cooperative offers \$200 on new electric heating.

**February 1968** – Board authorizes an agreement with North Central Dairymen for a large power contract for their plant at Curtiss. Board approves use of auditorium for a post prom party sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. (For March 7, 1968. The NRECA Long Range study questionnaire is filled out and sent in. (This was the study for the formation of the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, which was to become an important source of supplemental loan funds for electric cooperatives).

**March 1968** – Manager Bergemann reports that REA has suggested a possible rate reduction of between \$77,000 and \$106,000. Electric heating rate reduction (third in five years) is announced.

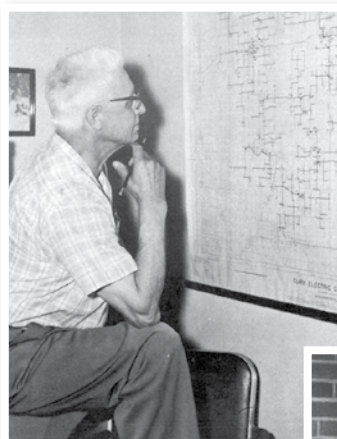
ranks of those who can remember and who are best qualified to tell this story to our upcoming generation is fast thinning. Today (1962) the Clark Electric Cooperative is servicing only 275 of the members who were among the 1,178 being served on December 31, 1938. Unless this story is told and retold by those who were a part of the darkness and drudgery, the time will come when these facts of history will be recited only as something out of a fictional past. That is why I think that our rural youth should hear from those who actually lived during that era when private power companies of this area really didn't give a hoot whether or not farm folks had central station electric service. They should also be told by you who know that it will become increasingly important to them to take a personal interest in this cooperative in order that good service and reasonable rates shall always remain within the control of their decisions.

Today, 25 years later (1962), your cooperatives is serving over 5,000 members along 1,450 miles of line. Just how many of you who are living a life today that revolves pretty much around the flip of an electric switch realize that it was made possible through people working together? How many of you realize that even today, many of you would still be without electric power were it not for your Clark Electric Cooperative?

On this significant anniversary of your cooperative, I feel that it is highly important that you not only realize but let it be known far and wide that the Clark Electric Cooperative has brought much more than electric power to the rural areas of Clark and adjoining counties. It has

brought much more than a higher standard of living to rural folks, more than an efficient and productive operation to farmers. It has brought buying power, the life blood of community progress, to the main streets that have made an effort to keep pace with the requirements of improved rural living in terms of merchandise and service.

The consumption of kilowatt hours, in rural areas as well as in urban centers, means the production and sale and the servicing of electric appliances and equipment,



*Above: Bill Dallman studies a system map on the wall of his office as he reflects on the 25 years of service to Clark Electric.*

*Below: U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson (left), then governor of Wisconsin, was the principal speaker at the 1962 annual meeting, at which the co-op's 25th anniversary was observed. Here, he looks over the 25th anniversary booklet with Manager Bill Dallman.*



## 1962-1969

**April 1968** – Board approves a donation from the Clark County 4-H Clubs for a piano to be kept in our auditorium. Board approves proposal for the manager and Don Fontaine to conduct small meetings with contractors to clear up any misunderstandings of installing or operating electric heating.

**May 1968** – Board authorizes the manager and a director to attend a meeting in Sioux Falls, S.D. on June 10 to discuss the future financing needs of electric cooperatives in the United States. (This is further discussion on the formation of NRUCFC).

**June 1968** – Board authorizes efforts to secure the Midland Cooperative Feed Mill (to be built in the Spencer area) for the Clark Electric service area.

**August 1968** – Board approves a 3-phase power agreement with Midland Cooperative Feed Mill to be located near Unity, Wisconsin. Commercial 3-phase rate reduction is announced in *R.E.C. News*.

**October 1968** – Board accepts bid for the purchase of the Cooperatives first basket truck at a cost of \$25,182. (Today, a basket truck costs approximately \$175,000-\$200,000.)

**November 1968** – Board authorizes the manager to hire additional apprentice lineman and digger operator, in order to keep up with our work load.

**December 1968** – Meter deposit for all renters increased from \$25 to \$50 effective January 1, 1969.

**February 20, 1969** – Board authorizes management to secure bids for a computer in the office.

**March 1, 1969** – Delmar Toburen resigns from the board and Eldore Humke is selected to replace him. The Board also approves the hiring of Delmar Toburen as a digger operator. Another electric heat rate reduction is announced in *R.E.C. News*.

**April 5, 1969** – Board instructs management to purchase an NCR 500 Computer at a price of \$36,431. (This is the cooperative's first venture in electronic data processing).

**May 3, 1969** – The anti-cooperative advertising by Wisconsin Power & Light Co. is brought to the attention of the board.

**June 7, 1969** – The Board approves a donation of \$200 to the cooperative Rally to be held in Wausau during cooperative month.

of water systems, new homes and remodeled homes, new barns and new milk houses, and all of the other products of labor and industry that go into living the better life. A part of that buying power comes from newly created jobs and increasing payrolls within our total operating structure, as well as jobs and payrolls that develop out of an expanding economy.

I shall continue to believe that Clark Electric Cooperative will continue to grow and prosper with the support of the membership into the future as in the past. I am confident that your directors will continue to provide facilities, equipment, and personnel to give you the very best in rural electric service at the lowest possible cost commensurate with sound business management and equal right and privileges for all members.

With some concentration these many years later, I am mindful of the many problems we were required to solve, with no precedents to guide us. There were moments of impatience, moments of frayed faith, but they were all resolved by the cooperation of the vast majority. Problems will continue, but they will be solved best, in the end, cooperatively. To me, it has all been for a very worthy cause. For me, a rich and rewarding experience. For those 25 eventful years I express my thanks to the membership, the boards of directors with whom I have worked down through the years, and to a staff of faithful employees who have joined with me in serving you as best we know how."



Bill Dallman's retirement party was held, appropriately, in the auditorium. The co-op's gift to the longtime manager was an electric welder, presented by Board President August Stremikis, left, to Dallman and his wife, Lucille.



Clark Electric Board posted for the last time with Bill Dallman, who had served as manager since Oct. 25, 1937. Front row, left to right: Ralph Woik (secretary-treasurer), Owen; Arnold Bakke (vice president), Curtiss; August Stremikis (president), Willard; Bill Dallman; and David Krutsch, Neillsville. Top row: Sidney Svenson, Withee; John Balcer, Thorp; Delmar Toburen, Greenwood; Vern Howard, Granton; and Gerhard Klein, Spencer.

## H.M. Bergemann is Clark Electric Cooperative's Second General Manager

Four months after Bill Dallman was hired as Clark Electric Cooperative's first general manager, Harland Bergemann joined the organization as its first bookkeeper. He also joined Bill Dallman in the formation of a team that worked together down through the years in a common purpose. The result was one of the largest and strongest cooperatives in Wisconsin.

In time, added responsibilities were created by the growth of Clark Electric Cooperative. To meet them the board created the position of office manager. Harland stepped into that role, with the major parts of the internal operation placed in his hands. The cooperative's accounting and records supervision continued as his major re-

Harland Bergemann was hired as Clark Electric Cooperative's first bookkeeper in January 1938, four months after Bill Dallman was hired as the co-op's first manager. Upon Dallman's retirement in 1964, Bergemann was named general manager of Clark Electric.



sponsibility. There was hardly a transaction that involved Clark Electric with its hundreds of associated contacts and contracts, and with its thousands of members, that Harland was not closely in touch with. This had been the natural development out of his experiences, which dated from the very beginning of the cooperative. With Mr. Bergemann's promotion to general manager, these responsibilities were now placed in other hands, subject to his direction and never far removed from his continuing knowledge of what was happening in all department of operation.

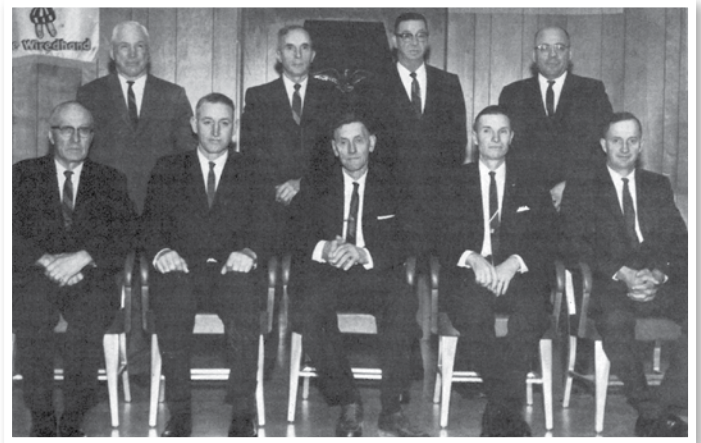


Three key employees of Clark Electric Cooperative in 1967 were, seated, veteran employee Elmer Learman, line superintendent, and "newcomer" Richard Adler; left, office manager, and Donald Fontaine, sales manager.

In Mr. Bergemann's first manager's report to the membership (September 1964 *Wisconsin R.E.C. News*), he said, "All I can say is that I will try to maintain the same progress (as Mr. Dallman) and to give the best service possible at the lowest possible cost. I hope that all members honestly feel this is their cooperative and will come in whenever they have a problem we can help with. We are here to serve you to the best of our ability."

## Key Decisions

In 1969, a number of key decisions were made that proved to be some of the most successful, long-reaching, and visionary decisions that our board of directors has made. On August 2, 1969, the cooperative became a member of the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (better known as CFC) to help in obtaining capital. In June of that year, the board also



Serving on the board of directors in the co-op's 30th year (1967) were, standing, left to right, Vern G. Howard, Neillsville; Sidney Svenson, Withee; William Bayuk, Willard; and Herman Klein, Spencer. Seated, left to right, are John Balcer, Thorp; David Krutsch, Neillsville; Arnold Bakke, vice president, Curtiss; Ralph Woik, president, Owen; Delmar Toburen, secretary-treasurer, Greenwood.

approved investment in Federated Rural Electric Insurance Corp. (This was the first investment in our insurance company) to help meet our insurance needs.

## The National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation Story

For most of the approximately 1,000 electric distribution cooperatives, generation and transmission cooperatives (G&Ts), statewide associations, and affiliated cooperative organizations operating in 47 states, the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC), based in Dulles, Va., serves as their premier private market lender—pumping critical lifeblood into cooperative systems and, in turn, local rural economies. More than 200 electric cooperatives, in fact, rely on CFC as their sole source of financing.

CFC's creation flowed from the same qualities—a desire to find a common solution—that led farmers and their rural neighbors, in partnership with the federal government, to organize electric cooperatives to provide themselves with central station electric service.

In 1967, with electric cooperative demand for capital exceeding the amount available (\$300 million annually in 2 percent loans) through the federal Rural Electrification Administration (REA), NRECA formed the Long-Range Study Committee to analyze future financing requirements and develop an alternate funding strategy to meet them. The panel was made up of chief executives from distribution systems, G&Ts, and statewide associations representing all 10 NRECA regions. J.K. Smith, general manager of the Louisville, Ky.-based Kentucky

Association of Electric Cooperatives (statewide), chaired the group.

The committee reached out to the existing network of financial entities—banks, insurance companies, and the Farm Credit System—over the next year. All expressed unwillingness to assist electric cooperatives.

Consensus then centered on a cooperative self-help approach—creating an independent, not-for-profit organization endowed with a solid financial base that would make loans only to electric cooperatives that owned it. The NRECA Board of Directors approved the concept in January 1969; on March 17 of that year, during the 27th NRECA Annual Meeting in Atlantic City, N.J., delegates overwhelmingly approved formation of CFC. The “supplemental cooperative lender,” as CFC was known at the

time, was incorporated on April 10 in Washington, D.C. Smith became its first governor, and served until 1979.

Within 18 months of CFC’s inception, 700 cooperatives had joined as members and inked 15-year commitments to provide “subscription capital” for establishing an initial equity pool. In December 1970, CFC began making loans, with each borrower pledging collateral—just as they did with loans from REA. Within a year CFC had approved more than 400 loans totaling \$130 million.

To raise more capital for long-term lending, CFC went to Wall Street with collateral trust bonds, backed by mortgages of member cooperatives and their solid three-plus-decade record of paying bills on time. CFC officially entered the bond market in late 1972—connecting Wall Street to Main Street.

1969–1972		1969–1972	
<p><b>June 7, 1969</b> – The Board of Directors approve the purchase of stock in Federated Rural Electric Insurance Corp. (This is the first investment in our insurance company).</p> <p><b>August 2, 1969</b> – The board of directors approve membership in the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation.</p> <p><b>September 1969</b> – Rates are changed to reflect a 4% Wisconsin Sales Tax. The manager reports that Westinghouse is again proposing to send out 150-watt electric light bulbs to our members and that Dairyland Power Cooperative has agreed to pay half the cost. Board accepts the proposal. Installation of 1,000th security light is announced in the <i>R.E.C. News</i>.</p> <p><b>November 1969</b> – The board accepts a bid for a new FWD digger truck at a cost of \$25,916.20. (Today a digger truck would cost approximately \$275,000). It is reported in the <i>R.E.C. News</i> that Marty Hillert is a member of junior board. (Marty later became a Clark Electric employee and is current the CEO of Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative in Friendship, Wisconsin.)</p>	<p><b>June 6, 1970</b> – The board authorizes the manager to purchase the Mary Vrkljan property, which adjoins the Marden property. (This is the proposed site for a new garage/warehouse building).</p> <p><b>July 6, 1970</b> – Board authorizes service to the Stevens subdivision in the Village of Spencer.</p> <p><b>September 5, 1970</b> – By a vote of 6 to 3, the board approves the capital term certificate investments in the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation. The board also approves the savings bond deduction program for employees interested in the payroll deduction method. The board approved an incentive of \$100 for new electrically heated homes.</p> <p><b>October 7, 1970</b> – Board approves a large power contract with Bock Industries of Spencer.</p>	<p><b>March 6, 1971</b> – Board adopts a resolution to become a member of the Wisconsin REA Youth Foundation, Inc. (This organization is to become the Federated Youth Foundation in later years). Board also approves an adjustment in retail rates to reflect the increase in power cost from DPC. Minimum goes from \$2 to \$4 (kWhs also go from 20 to 40 for the minimum) and about 1 mill is added to the last step of the rates. Commercial rates that had been higher are eliminated as well as irrigation rates that no members were being billed on.</p> <p><b>May 1, 1971</b> – Board approves a large power contract with Dwight Treankler, president of the Central State Speedway. A resolution of thanks and appreciation is adopted for Vern G. Howard, attending his last board meeting. (He is ineligible to run again under provisions of the bylaws).</p> <p><b>May 22, 1971</b> – Retired Manager W.A. Dallman passes away at his retirement home in Brandon, Florida.</p> <p><b>July 7, 1971</b> – Board approves a large power contract with Clark County Central Cheese Factory. After discussion, a motion is passed to abandon the finance committee because it duplicates work performed by the board of directors.</p> <p><b>October 2, 1971</b> – Attorney Floyd Wheeler is authorized to intervene on behalf of the cooperative in the Stevens Subdivision matter before the Public Service Commission – even if it means taking the matter before Circuit Court.</p> <p><b>December 1971</b> – Board authorizes payment of \$1,000 to N.S.P. for underground lines in the Stevens Subdivision in the area we were allowed to serve.</p>	<p><b>May 6, 1972</b> – Board approves a large power contract with Ralph Benson for his saw mill. Board authorizes the installation of 12-15 miles of underground lines to be done by a contractor (our first underground primary lines).</p> <p><b>June 2, 1972</b> – President Ralph Woik conducts the note-burning ceremony of the first loan made to Clark Electric Cooperative in the amount of \$700,000 for the construction of the first 700 miles of line. Members approve the re-stated Articles of Incorporation but instruct the board to hold a public hearing with a bylaws committee and bring back any changes to next year’s annual meeting.</p>



The first bond issue got an “A” rating, a show of strength that indicated the CFC concept was solid.

On December 29 of that year, three weeks after CFC had issued its first collateral trust bonds, President Richard Nixon abruptly terminated the REA direct loan program that had been in place since 1936. The action instantly transformed CFC into a vital financing institution for electric cooperatives, and it quickly advanced \$45 million to meet critical capital needs.

During the electric cooperative power plant construction boom of the mid-1970s through early '80s, CFC developed innovative programs for G&Ts. On January 26, 1981, it formed National Cooperative Services Corporation (NCSC) to help cooperatives reduce the cost of new generation facilities through tax-advantaged financing vehicles (such as leverage leases) available at the time. Today, NCSC offers services that CFC can't, such as financing for-profit electric cooperative ventures, loans to cooperative consumers for home energy efficiency improvements, and acquisitions of investor-owned utility service territories.

As the only financial institution created and owned by electric cooperatives, CFC continues to provide its members with innovative financing services and industry expertise. CFC's senior secured debt is rated at the equivalent of an “A+” level with Wall Street credit rating agencies, and its loan portfolio (loans and guarantees outstanding) stands at \$20 billion (as of Nov. 30, 2011).

Today, Clark Electric Cooperative still utilizes CFC to help meet our capital needs, and it has proven to be a very valuable financial partner.

## Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange Story

Beginning in 1955, rural electric leaders began holding a series of meetings to explore the feasibility of forming a self-insurance program. The goal was to secure long-term coverage at reasonable premiums. In 1956, a detailed

study under the direction of the University of Wisconsin School of Commerce found savings could be achieved if cooperatives were to adopt a self-insurance plan.

In 1958, an organizational meeting of Federated was held in Madison, Wisconsin, with 15 cooperatives subscribing to capital stock. On March 24, 1958, Bill Thomas, Federated's firm general manager, in his report to Wisconsin Electric Cooperative membership made the following statement: “A few years from now, we will regard the formation of Federated as one of our greatest assets to our cooperative members.” History has proven Mr. Thomas correct.

On July 20, 1959, the Wisconsin State Insurance Commissioner issued Federated a license to do business in Wisconsin. This was the first license in the nation's history issued to an organization of electric cooperatives. On September 1, 1959, Federated issued the first policy to the Wisconsin Electric Cooperatives for Workers' Compensation coverage, the first policy written. Fourteen other cooperatives announced they would subscribe as their Workers' Compensation coverage expired.

In 1964, Federated expanded into Iowa, South Dakota, and Kansas and, by 1983, Federated was writing business in 17 states. Today, Federated has an 84.6 percent market share of core electric cooperatives in 42 states.

In 1999, shareholders of Federated voted to amend the Articles of Incorporation to re-domesticate to Kansas and convert from a Wisconsin stock insurer to a Kansas reciprocal insurance exchange—a cooperative owned and operated insurance company. Since becoming a cooperative in 1999, Federated has allocated \$117 million in patronage capital to its members and has returned over \$45 million in retired patronage capital and return of capital previously invested in Federated.

In the beginning, the overall goal in the formation of Federated was to secure long-term coverage at reasonable premiums. The best way to control insurance costs is to minimize losses and the expenses tied to them. That focus continues today.

# Leadership

Clark Electric Cooperative has been blessed to have dedicated board members and high-quality employees who strive to provide the best possible service at the lowest possible price. Throughout the years, several of the directors and employees have been recognized on the state level for their exceptional contribution to rural electrification.

## Herman C. Potthast Award

Dedicated to the training and safety of rural electric cooperative employees, Herman Potthast served Wisconsin's and the nation's rural electric cooperatives for 29 years. He died of a heart attack in 1972, while attending the NRECA annual meeting in Las Vegas. He was 60. Starting

### 1972–1975

**September 2, 1972** – The manager reports that after many meetings with the manager of the Marshfield Water & Electric Dept., a territorial agreement has been agreed upon. Approval of the agreement was made by the board (probably the first such agreement between any utilities in the State of Wisconsin). Budget billing is announced in the September issue of the R.E.C. News.

**November 4, 1972** – The board approves entering into a contract with the Breeder Reactor Corp. for development of the Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor at a cost of ¼ mill per kWh sold during 1970 and to be paid over a period of 10 years (a project later to be abandoned).

**March 6, 1973** – A long discussion is held by the board on financial future of the cooperative, including the possibility of a rate increase or borrowing, and also establishing a member equity as a base to work from in the future on either borrowing or increasing rates.

**March 27, 1973** – Bylaws committee meets again to vote on various changes to the re-stated bylaws to be presented at the annual meeting.

**April 7, 1973** – Board adopts revised retail electric rates. Basic rates are the same but the power cost adjustment is added. The PCA is to be changed every four months based on actual charges from D.P.C. only. P.C.A. base is .0115. Electric heat rates remain at .0133 per kWh.

**April 24, 1973** – Line Superintendent Jerry Sowieja is first recipient of the H.C. Potthast memorial safety award.

**May 31, 1973** – A motion is made and passed that young ladies also be allowed to serve on our Junior Board of Directors.

**June 6, 1973** – A discussion is held regarding the future of the queen contest since it had been left up to the

board by the members at the last annual meeting. The contest was ultimately abandoned.

**July 6, 1973** – Board adopts a motion that we become a member of the Federated Youth Foundation and pay the necessary \$250 membership fee.

**August 6, 1973** – Board adopts single-phase line extension policy and a policy on service to mobile homes, campers, and other temporary installations.

**November 3, 1973** – President is authorized to sign the stipulation giving the office employees the right, without a public hearing, to vote as to whether or not they want to join a union.

**December 1, 1973** – A full discussion is held in regard to future policy on underground construction and the cost involved due to equipment used, additional housing costs as well as increased materials inventory. It is generally agreed that the trend is toward underground construction and that we should move in that direction whenever cost and environment could justify it. The board approves the purchase of a Case cable plow and trailer for \$30,000. (Today, a cable plow costs approximately \$150,000).

in 1973, the Wisconsin Job Training and Safety program has presented the Herman C. Potthast Award annually for job safety achievements. It is awarded to the worker who best represents the qualities of dedication, leadership, cooperation, and service. Jerry Sowiejka was the first ever recipient in 1973. Bob Moseley won the award in 2001.

**Jerry Sowiejka**, Clark Electric Cooperative line superintendent, was the first recipient of the Herman C. Potthast award. Sowiejka had been on the Clark Electric Cooperative staff since 1948 and became line superintendent in 1975. Before becoming line superintendent, he received state-wide recognition as the recipient for an award for saving the life of a fellow employee. The Potthast memorial award was presented



to him by Marvin Nelson, safety specialist with the Rural Electrification Administration in Washington, D.C. Other guest speakers were John Bockoven, president of Federated Rural Electric Insurance Corporation in Madison, and Arnold Stevens, safety co-coordinator with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in Washington.

**Bob Moseley**, Clark Electric Cooperative director of operations, received the Potthast Award in 2001. Bob started as an apprentice lineman, then lineman. He became an operations aide in 1987, working his way to assistant line superintendent. In 1992 he became director of operations. When describing Bob, it was said that he doesn't know the meaning of the words "I don't have the time" or "please find someone else to do the job"—he's just truly dedicated to his job. This award was in recognition for Bob's dedication in promoting training and safety.



## Ally of Cooperative Electrification Award

The Ally of Cooperative Electrification (ACE) Award is the highest honor given by the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association. It was started in 1967 and is presented annually in recognition of outstanding contributions to Wisconsin's electric co-ops. Clark Electric Cooperative has had three award winners throughout the years.

### 1972-1975

**February 2, 1974** – The manager asks the board to reconsider the amount of travel expenses paid to employees on cooperative business. He explains it has been 10 cents since the first of December but that the rapidly increasing automobile expenses (especially gasoline costs) exceed the 10 cents presently allowed. Board approves the change to 12 cents. The matter of setting the date for the 1974 annual meeting is discussed. It is felt that because many members want the meeting earlier than June, the meeting be set for April 20. (This is probably the first meeting to be held other than during the month of June).

**March 2, 1974** – A general discussion in regard to future financing is held. It is agreed

that the figures in a three-year financial forecast are reasonable and that we should use cash reserves for our new building (garage and warehouse across the street), other equipment needed and the payment of capital credits, etc., rather than plan on borrowing right now. The manager also reports that the office employees rejected the offer by the IBEW to join the union.

**May 4, 1974** – Plans for the new building are gone over. Contract is awarded to Gaier Construction Co. of Neillsville.

**December 7, 1974** – Board approves purchase of a back hoe trenching machine. (This is the first back hoe purchased).

**March 1, 1975** – Board adopts a resolution to the Wisconsin Legislature in support of Bill 297, which will allow the cooperatives to continue to charge penalties the same as the investor-owned utilities. Board adopts a change in rates: Electric heat rate to increase to 1.7 cents, off peak rate to 1.2 cents. Large power rate increases to 2 cents per kWh in the first step and 1.3 cents in the second step. Minimum charge set at \$60 per month. Power cost adjustment adopted and will be changed each month the cooperative's cost per kWh from Dairyland Power exceeds .0115 per kWh. A credit will be issued for costs under .0115.

**May 10, 1975** – (annual meeting) – Discussion is held on the possibility of refunding capital credits to aged persons. The board is advised to seriously consider this method. Compensation of board remains at \$30 per diem and 10 cents mileage. Delegates to be paid \$18 per diem plus 10 cents per mile.

**June 9, 1975** – Board authorizes management to invest in short-term securities through the CFC organization or the F & M Bank in Greenwood.

**August 4, 1975** – Capital credit study committee is appointed: Brice Bender, Anthony Jarocki, Gary Schultz, Everett Dux, Gerhard Klein, Richard Eibergen, Ronald Cook, Darrell Horn, Irving Davis, Emil Luchterhand, and Jerry Glashoff.

**December 22, 1975** – Brice Bender, chairman of the capital credits study committee, reports recommendation that the payment of credits on the revolving plan and to estates be continued, but the paying on age is not recommended. The board approves the recommendation.

## Vern Howard

served the rural electrification program for 34 years before his retirement in 1971. Inscribed on the plaque were the words “For meritorious service in the field of rural electrification; for his dedication in bringing lights where there was darkness, ease where there was drudgery and a full life to every rural person through the use of electricity.” In addition to serving as Clark Electric Cooperative president, he was a Dairyland Power Cooperative director for 23 years and also served Wisconsin Power Cooperative, one of Dairyland’s predecessor organizations. Vern Howard received



the ACE award in 1976 at the age of 80.

**Ralph Woik** received the top recognition on March 4, 1997. Woik served in various elected posts with cooperatively owned electric utilities and other cooperative organizations for over 33 years. Woik took his first electric cooperative leadership post in 1962 when he was



appointed to the board of Clark Electric Cooperative. He was subsequently elected to the director’s post 11 times by the cooperative membership. Woik was president of the Clark board for 12 years; he also served stints as vice president and secretary–treasurer.

In addition, he was a director on the board of WECA for 10 years and also served on the Dairyland Power Cooperative Board of Directors.

**Dick Adler**, Clark Electric Cooperative CEO/gener-

## 1976–1981

**March 26, 1976** – (Annual Meeting) Report of the capital credit committee is given. Motion is passed that the board investigate further into the payment of capital credits to the elderly.

**May 1, 1976** – Special electric heat rates discontinued.

**May 7, 1976** – A discussion is held in regard to receiving and giving assistance to other cooperatives in restoring electric service after severe outages. Manager is authorized to enter into an agreement for restoration of electric service with any of the electric cooperatives, for the benefit of our members as well as theirs. (This program evolved to a program now known as Restoration of Power in an Emergency ROPE, which has been utilized many times).

**September 7, 1976** – A discussion is held in regard to discontinuing free meter sockets. It is agreed that an administrative policy should state that the member will furnish the socket along with the service entrance. A revision of refunding of capital credits is discussed in detail. It is agreed that further thought should be given to refunding on the discount method to estates, on age and joint accounts.

**December 6, 1976** – Administrative policy #8 is adopted wherein the capital credits paid to estates would be discounted to a current day value, with discount to start at 6% and be reviewed annually.

**January 7, 1977** – H.M. Bergemann announces that he will retire as general manager on January 31, 1978. Richard Adler is appointed assistant general manager effective February 1, 1977. In the January issue of R.E.C. News, members are urged to shift usage away from peak periods (6-8 a.m. & p.m.)

**February 8, 1977** – Board authorizes the sale of CFC Series E collateral trust bonds to members, employees and directors. In view of request by Governor Lucey that we lower our penalty rate, the following was adopted. In lieu of the 10% penalty: “The above rates are net, the gross rates being 3% higher with the minimum of 30 cents for any one account. In the event the current monthly bill is not paid on or before the due date the gross rates shall apply.” Board approves contract with H.M. Bergemann to remain as a consultant for seven years following his retirement on January 31, 1978.

**June 8, 1977** – Employment agreement is entered into with Richard Adler to be general manager effective February 1, 1978.

**July 8, 1977** – Board authorizes the officers to enter into an agreement to loan the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association \$6,037 for 15 years without interest for the construction of a new headquarters building in Madison.

**August 8, 1977** – Board approves borrowing \$ 1,800,000 from REA and CFC, the first loan since 1963. (With higher rates coming from Dairyland in the next few years, a loan is necessary to provide capital to replace and build new electric facilities rather than raise rates.)

**September 6, 1977** – Dick Adler reports on visiting two cooperatives in Indiana using IBM System 32 computers. This is a study process to determine a new computer system for our office in the near future.

**March 1978** – R.E.C. News reports 9,500 students in area schools view safety demonstrations put on by Clark Electric Cooperative employees. Re-instatement of electric heat rate is announced.

**September 6, 1978** – Board authorizes the purchase of data processing equipment for use in the general office at a cost of \$ 67,496.

**October 5, 1978** – Board approves a proposal to participate with the electric cooperatives in Wisconsin in an advertisement in the R.E.C. News offering \$ 1,000 reward for convictions of persons for destruction of property and \$250 reward for conviction of persons tampering with meters. The manager indicated we would be asked to contribute \$100 reward offer into a pool with the other cooperatives should there be a claim for the reward.

**December 1978** – Rate increase of 3 mills to cover cost of purchased power announced in R.E.C. News.

al manager, received the Wisconsin electric cooperatives' highest honor in 2003; Adler was the 37<sup>th</sup> recipient of the award. At the awards presentation, Adler had words of thanks for his mentor, former Clark Electric General Manager Harland Bergemann, now 95 (in 2003).

Adler said he and Bergemann continue to keep in touch "and he's still giving me good advice." The award was presented during the annual WECA Education and Legislative Day in Madison; a cooperative manager who called the recipient his mentor handed the plaque to Adler. Adams-Columbia's Marty Hillert, hired by Adler for his first cooperative job, said it was "a privilege and an honor" giving the award to a man



he had "worked with and for and learned so much from." Adler has been "a person of uncommon patience, fairness, good-nature, intelligence, goodwill, and generosity," said WECA Statewide Manager David Jenkins. Adler had been employed at Clark Electric since 1960 and became its third general manager in 1978. He retired in January 2005.

## Bergemann's Last Report

The following is H.M Bergemann's final General Manager's report as delivered April 16, 1977 at the cooperative's annual meeting. Mr. Bergemann was the second general manager of Clark Electric Cooperative; his career spanned between 1938-1978.

\* \* \*

Today I make my last report to you. I have advised

### 1976-1981

**January 5, 1979** – The cooperative will use the American Legion Post in Loyal to hold the 1979 Annual Meeting.

**February 6, 1979** – Manager reports he met with Dave Larson, Taylor Electric Cooperative manager, who indicated he would be leaving in the near future and it might be a good time to look at the possibility of the two cooperatives merging. After discussion, a motion was passed to look further into the matter and have REA and CFC conduct a feasibility study, just so there is no cost to us for the study.

**March 9, 1979** – Manager reports on Dairyland Association of Manager meeting and states the new Dairyland rate structure was approved by a vote of 21 to 7 so the recommendation will go to the Dairyland Board of Directors. Mr. Adler states he is opposed to the rate at this time because DPC will not have a system ready for two to three years yet to control our high demand periods.

**May 3, 1979** – The manager reports that the financial condition of the cooperative has fallen during the first three months of 1979. After a lengthy discussion, the board approves an interim rate increase, effective July 1, 1979. The manager further recommends that an extensive rate study be made to determine if each class of consumer is paying its fair share under guidelines of current rate making commissions.

**June 8, 1979** – Manager reports on bids for underground construction. Board approves the low bid in the amount of \$368,563. The manager presents the findings of preliminary studies conducted in regard to the possible merger of the cooperative with Taylor Electric Cooperative of Medford. After considerable discussion, a motion is passed to stop all further study because the present figures show little or no savings to Clark Electric Cooperative.

**January 1980** – \$1.5 million mark in capital credit refunds announced in R.E.C. News

**April 11, 1980** – (special meeting) – John Luehrsen, from Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association, reviews our equity plan, present rates and revenue requirements for the next three years.

**May 1980** – The manager presents the revised rate schedules as discussed at the April 11 meeting. The rate increase and restructuring is approved.

**June 5, 1980** – Ten-inch rainfall causes extensive outages and flooding throughout the area.

**September 5, 1980** – The manager reports that he has been obtaining information concerning organizing a cable TV cooperative. After discussion, it is agreed that Clark Electric Cooperative sponsor a countywide information meeting.

**January 6, 1981** – The manager reports that Dairyland Power Cooperative has a program for pre-paying power bills and we could earn more interest than through banks. Prepayment is authorized.

**February 9, 1981** – Manager Adler reports that the cable TV cooperative is proposed to be organized on February 25, 1981. The organizational meeting is to be held in our auditorium and memberships are to be \$5 each.

**March 6, 1981** – Board authorizes \$500 donation to Heartland Communications Cooperative and offers temporary management and office assistance to serve their cause.

**April 6, 1981** – Manager recommends the start of an annual pole testing program that would help identify weak and defective poles so they can be replaced. Board approves.

**June 4, 1981** – Board approves a normal and emergency assistance agreement between Dairyland and Clark. Manager reports the 1981-1982 construction work plan is about complete and that another REA loan would be needed. Staff is currently working on the power requirements study and 10-year financial forecast.

**October 1, 1981** – Manager reports on the 9.5 miles of three-phase conversion needed in the Towns of Hixon and Hord. He states he checked into process for outside contractors, but their prices were too high, more than double our labor rates. He recommends we attempt to build the line ourselves but contract more of our tree trimming and cutting. Recommendation approved.

**November 3, 1981** – Manager reports that specifications are being drawn for the new radio system. After a discussion it is moved and seconded to install a new antenna system in the amount of \$2,200.



*Harland Bergemann shortly after he became general manager of Clark Electric Cooperative in 1965.*

the board of directors that I want to leave at the end of next January (1978). That may sound like a peculiar time to leave, but that will complete 40 years of service. Really it doesn't seem that long — but I guess it is because I have enjoyed the work and the fact that I was helping people who needed it. As a kid I knew what it was like to carry a lantern, crawl up in the haymow in the dark and study by kerosene lamps.

It was on January 28, 1938, that I started working for you. The office was still in the old courthouse in Neillsville and a part of county agent Wallace Landry's office. We then came to Greenwood and located in what is now the Greenwood Bakery. The first part of our present office was built in 1948, and since that we have added the one with the auditorium and just recently another warehouse.

When I set up the original books, all we had was an adding machine and a typewriter. Outside we had three ¾ ton trucks. There isn't need for going into more detail because you can easily see the tremendous changes that have taken place from that time up to today. When we first began operation we were referred to as the "white elephant" of Wisconsin because we had the most miles of line with the fewest hook-ups. Today that has all changed. We have a fine cooperative and can justly be proud of it.

While there have been many, many changes I guess we can say it was all done in the name of progress, but our aim or goal is still the same. In 1965 when I first became your manager, I said the following to you: "It is the ultimate aim of your electric cooperative to furnish you, as members, the best in electric service. We have grown a great deal over the years: Our members' use of electricity has increased tremendously. We have added many new homes and farms and even some industry to our lines. All

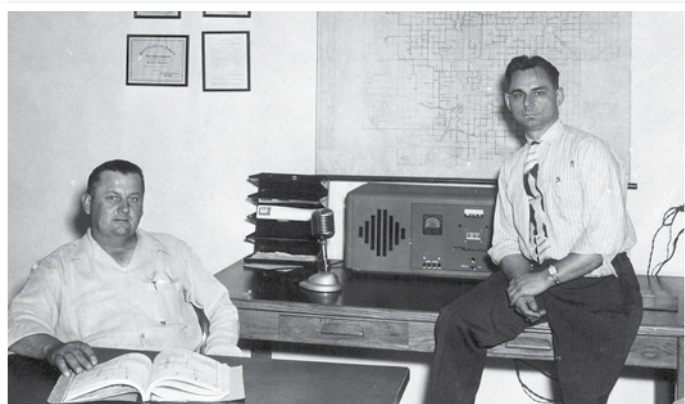
this is progress and it is reflected in the lives of those we serve.

Throughout the rest of 1965, we hope to continue the same progressive advance we have enjoyed over the past years — yet, still making it our main purpose to provide you with the best possible service at the lowest possible cost. That philosophy hasn't changed and I know it will continue when Richard Adler takes over as your new manager. Richard is well qualified and has contributed much to the progress of your cooperative. Without a doubt new leadership with new ideas and plans will bring greater benefits to the members. The future of your cooperative with Dick at the helm looks very bright.

I hope too that you will continue to put men or women on the board with the same ability and dedication as you have in the past. In my 40 years I have seen the result of board action or inaction in some cases of other cooperatives, and believe me, your board has always been respected because of decisions they have made and the position they take at the various meetings we attend. I know of none of them who have ever come on the board because they wanted to benefit themselves or have taken such action after they were on. Their decisions have always been made with the intent that the majority of the members would benefit and the financial strength of the cooperative would not be impaired. Believe me, that isn't always the easiest thing to do. We should all be proud of them. I am.

I want to thank the members for their splendid cooperation, the board for direction and well-defined policy, and the employees who have done such a fine job. I have said it many times in the past and I will say it again, our membership, the directors, and the employees are the best. There is no electric cooperative that I would rather have worked for.

I am most thankful to you all and I hope to see and visit with you many more times.—*H.M Bergemann*



*Bookkeeper Harland Bergemann (right) with Elmer Learmna, line superintendent, in 1949. Bergemann became general manager in 1965 and served in that post until 1978.*

# Milestones & Celebrations

April 1, 1987, marked the 50th Anniversary of Clark Electric Cooperative. The following is an excerpt from General Manager Dick Adler as the cooperative prepared to celebrate 50 years of providing service to the members.

\* \* \*

Clark Electric Cooperative was originally organized at Neillsville by Clark County residents under the tremendous leadership of County Agent Wallace Landry. Later that year, June 26, 1937, Clark Electric Cooperative merged into one system with Willard Electric and the Big Four Electric Cooperative of Spencer. Willard Electric,

organized March 27, 1936, was the second electric cooperative in Wisconsin; Big Four Electric was third, organizing March 30, 1936.

The first board of directors included Vern G. Howard, Martin Klarich, Wallace Landry, L.T. Klein, C.F. Baldwin, Ed Klein, Rex Cooper, Gustave Voight, and Milton F. Page. They, along with other dedicated members, spent countless hours to get the organization moving and operating.

I'm sure they could hardly believe the successful organization that evolved in the next 50 years. Today this organization serves over 6,500 meters, along 1,700 miles of line that extended into six counties.

The original board of directors borrowed \$700,000 to construct 700 miles of line back in the 1930s. At that time, it was the largest single loan issued by the Rural Electrification Administration in Washington, D.C. Today, 50 years later, a total of almost \$4 million has been borrowed through the years with about \$1.8 million to be paid off yet. The cooperative has grown with assets



*Above: Alice and Brice Bender visit with Mrs. Walter Ott; Sandy (Meissner) Garrand, Clark Electric's former Miss National Rural Electrification; and former General Manager Harland Bergemann at Clark Electric's 50th anniversary celebration. Right: The Greenwood Satellites and Braun 4-H clubs did an excellent job of serving food and waiting on tables at the celebration.*





*Local 4-H'ers provided entertainment at the 50th anniversary celebration. Reseburg Ramblers 4-H Club (above) presented a one-act play entitled "Life Without Electricity." In this scene, they are farmers discussing the merits of organizing their own electric cooperative. Maplewood Badgers 4-H Club (right) reenacted the "Day the Lights Came On." In this scene, the mother visits with a neighbor while linemen make the final connections in the yard.*



now amounting to over \$13.5 million, annual revenue of almost \$8 million and net savings to our member of nearly \$1.0 million per year.

Financial ownership of the system would probably be the most pleasant surprise to the first incorporators. Can you imagine any cooperative borrowing such large amounts back in the 1930s and be able to pay the loans back and accumulate equity of almost \$11 million?

It took a lot of hard, diligent work by many members and employees to make our cooperative one of the most successful in the United States. During 1987, we will be scheduling events for a

## 1982-1987

**February 4, 1982** – Manager presents information pertaining to the new load management system. He states that the radio control receivers would be furnished by Dairyland and we would have to install them. Board approves a \$3 per month credit to members allowing a control to be installed.

**March 11, 1982** – Manager presents proposed estimated budget and equity management plan. A lengthy discussion is had regarding a possible need for a general rate increase. No action is taken.

**May 1982** – Reward 36 program introduced in R.E.C. News. \$36 annual refund for members allowing the cooperative to control water heaters.

**May 5, 1982** – Board approves new mobile radio system to cost \$49,957.

**August 5, 1982** – Manager reports that with the large number of members who have signed up for water heater

controls, we are going to need extra help for installation. He suggests that we offer to pay employees \$25 per control for installation during evening hours and weekends, on their own time. Board approves.

**August 27, 1982** – After discussion, a motion is approved to hire Attorney Jim Ward to assist the cooperative with labor negotiations.

**September 1982** – In just five short months the Reward 36 member participation reaches 1,246.

**December 9, 1982** – Manager reports that so far this year there have been no lost-time accidents recorded. He suggests that a bonus plan be set up for the employee Christmas party, whereby \$500 would be given in the event no lost-time accidents occurred again. For each day lost, there would be a deduction of \$50 and the balance would go to the employee Christmas fund. Approved by the board.

**March 17, 1983 (Annual Meeting)** – Discussion is held on alternatives of raising rates or borrowing money to provide funds for construction and maintenance. The general agreement is to raise rates.

**April 4, 1983** – Manager presents a new rate structure for review; increase of approximately 8.5% is approved, to become effective July 1.

**February 2, 1984** – Manager reports to the board on routine meter testing program, which is falling behind because of insufficient staff time. Board authorizes getting prices from an outside firm.

**March 6, 1984** – Office Manager Marty Hillert attends board meeting for Dick Adler, who is hospitalized with a mild heart attack.

**April 1984** – The Reward 36 load management program reaches a milestone of 2,000 participants (controls installed).

**June 5, 1984** – Board approves purchase of a new digger-derrick truck at a cost of \$94,304 plus tax (in 2012 the cost of a digger-derrick is approximately \$275,000). June R.E.C. News includes announcement that Chapman Electric Metering Co. is to be testing meters.

**July 5, 1984** – Board considers program of installing high-pressure sodium lights instead of mercury vapor lights because of greater energy efficiency.

**September 4, 1984** – Board approves new rate for security lights along with plan for replacing mercury lights with sodium lights. The September R.E.C. News reports that delinquent accounts are worsening because of hard times in rural areas. Chargeoffs for the year are expected to set a new record.

**November 1984** – Members are urged to inquire about stray voltage tests available through the cooperative.

1983



celebration of this success. Clark Electric Cooperative members have much to be proud of.

## Cooperative Tax Bill Offered

Legislation to revise the method of gross receipts taxation for rural electric cooperatives in Wisconsin was formally introduced in the Wisconsin Senate on March 4, 1987. Introduction of Senate Bill 130 followed several weeks of intense efforts by Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) to obtain sponsors in both houses of the legislature.

The result was 76 lawmakers (18 senators and 58 representatives) signing the bill jacket as co-authors. The signatures translated into more than half the legislature sponsoring the bill, with majorities of both parties in both Houses secured.

The revision sought by supporters of SB 130 would provide electric cooperatives with the same tax treatment for energy sales as was then allowed investor-owned



*Above: Attorney Floyd Wheeler recalled many of the events he was involved with over the years, as well as praised Wallace Landry for his early years of service to Clark Electric.*

utilities (IOUs). It would do that by increasing the REC tax rate from 2.35 percent to the 3.19 percent used by IOUs and would permit cooperatives to deduct costs of buying wholesale power in determining their tax, elimi-

1982-1987

**January 3, 1985** – Directors discuss junior board program. Over the past few years it has been harder to get schools to participate because youths were missing school. It is agreed to try to set up only three meetings per year (summer months).

**August 2, 1985** – A discussion is had in regard to controls for water heaters where the member has a time-of-day meter installed. A motion is passed that the controls be made available to any time-of-day consumer and that they be sold at our cost and installed free.

**October 4, 1985** – Two members appear before board on a dispute of why a meter deposit is requested when there is no guarantee that they won't be disconnected for non-payment. After a lengthy discussion, they are invited to consult with their legal counsel.

**February 18, 1986 (special meeting)** – Dick Adler and Don Fontaine are present for a discussion of appliance department. Discussion includes what would happen if sales and service were discontinued. After lengthy discussion, continuation of the department is approved.

**March 1986 (Annual Meeting)** – Members appointed to bylaws committee: William Howard, Granton; Wendy Savage, Spencer, Florence Garbush, Loyal; Norman Meissner, Chili; Donald Koerner, Dorchester; Herbert Laib, Willard; Frank Cesarec, Willard; Robert Opelt, Neillsville; August Stremikis, Willard; Henry Ryan, Spencer; Frank Govek, Willard.

**April 1986** – New promotion announced in R.E.C. News: \$200 for dual fuel and \$50 rebates for electric water heaters; 2 cents per kWh rebate (maximum \$200 annual) for controlled electric heat with wood backup.

**June 5, 1986** – Ralph Woik, Edward Brehm, and Peter Flashinski are appointed to serve on the bylaws committee with members selected during annual meeting. A motion is approved that the cooperative enter in the sales, service, and installation of ground water heat pumps and that we conduct information seminars for the members to become acquainted with the units. Manager also suggests that we participate

in the REA 5% loan program to finance the installation of groundwater heat pumps plus other energy conservation materials. Approved by the board. Collection fee increase from \$10 to \$15 per trip announced in June R.E.C. News.

**September 5, 1986** – Manager reports to board that from now on we will be able to have all the energy used for heating on an air-to-air heat pump registered on the controlled rate. With a temperature sensor on the meter, when the temperature rises to set limit (65-70 degrees), the usage will automatically stop recording on the controlled heat meter and register on the main meter. In the past, only resistance heat had been measured on the controlled rate, which is used solely for heat.

**October 7, 1986** – Line truck accident is reported (The truck, driven by an employee, hit a road washout after heavy rains on September 22; chassis was a total loss, with minor damage to the utility box. All was covered by insurance). After executive session, the board has no objection to searching for a replacement for Don Fontaine, appliance sales manager. Board also expresses interest in office staying open during noon hours and asks the manager to work something out with the appliance department.

**January 1987** – Effective January 1, the Reward 36 program ends and Reward 48 begins. This means members who allow load control on their electric water heater will be allowed a monthly rebate of \$4, which makes an annual rebate of \$48.

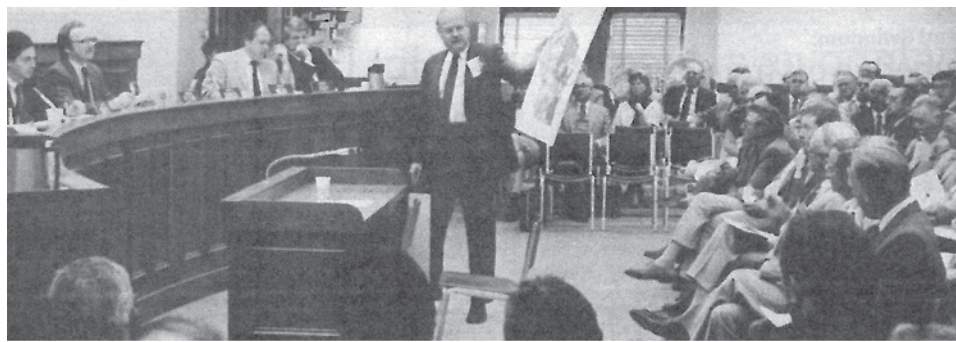
**January 7, 1987** – The board approves the purchase of a brush chipper, the cooperative's first.

**February 9, 1987** – For the 50th anniversary celebration, the board decides to have an open house with pancake/sausage breakfast for the membership and general public on June 26. Over 700 guests attended the event.

**April 27, 1987** – Dairyland Power Cooperative announces that it would be closing the La Crosse Boiling Water Reactor (LACBWR)

**August 5, 1987** – The cooperative decides to participate in the crime watch program.

*WECA Legislative Counsel Charles Van Sickle (standing), backed by more than 100 electric co-op leaders from around the state, explains why RECs back passage of Senate Bill 130. The public hearing was conducted by the State Senate Committee on Aging, Banking, Commercial Credit and Taxation.*



nating a “double tax” which was then experienced by rural electric cooperatives.

“That’s what has persuaded so many lawmakers to support the bill — because it’s simply a matter of fair play,” WECA Legislative Counsel Chuck Van Sickle said. Ultimately SB 130 was folded into the 1987 Budget Bill.

One of the most important legislative victories ever for Wisconsin’s electric cooperatives received final approval when Governor Tommy Thompson signed the state budget bill into law July 31, 1987.

“The entire effort could be considered a textbook example of how to achieve beneficial legislation,” WECA Legal Counsel Charles Van Sickle said. “And it couldn’t have happened without the combined effort of all of us.”

## Genoa Plant Closing Questions Resolved

Dairyland Power Cooperative’s announcement that it would be closing the Genoa Nuclear Power Plant created something of a furor among state officials, but at a subsequent meeting it appeared most concerns were laid to rest. Dairyland announced April 27, 1987, the plant would discontinue electric generation in mid-May, be defueled, and eventually be decommissioned following transfer of the used fuel to a permanent repository.

The announcement was widely publicized, due partly to concerns expressed publicly by State Senator Joseph Strohl and others about how radioactive waste would be managed. Because of the public concern, Dairyland Power General Manager Jim Taylor and Assistant General Manager Jack Leifer almost immediately scheduled a briefing session at the Capitol in Madison for legislators, legislative staff, and the press on details of the decision concerning the La Crosse Boiling Water Reactor (LACBWR). Following a battery of questions asked of the Dairyland representatives at the meeting, Senator Strohl commended Dairyland for its openness and for bringing the information to the legislature promptly.

Recently re-negotiated coal and coal transportation contracts would have a positive effect on the cost savings associated with operating Dairyland’s coal-fired

plants, according to Dairyland officials. This was given as a major reason for the decision to discontinue operation at LACBWR, which produced only about 5 percent of Dairyland’s system power requirements. The rising cost of operating a nuclear plant, the low growth rate in electrical demand, and the current regional surplus of generating capacity were listed as contributing factors to the decision.

## New Industrial Park (1988)

The vision statement of Clark Electric Cooperative reads, “Members are the reason for our existence. We strive to be recognized and respected by our membership as providing the highest level of quality service and value through accountability, innovation, integrity, and commitment to community.” The mission statement reads, “To provide reliable, competitively priced energy and related services to our customers and maximum value to



*To comply with new state and federal regulations concerning underground fuel tanks, Clark Electric removed all of its underground tanks. Pictured is equipment from David Laird Enterprises of Cornell, a subcontractor of McCutchin Crane Service from Dodgeville, removing a 10,000-gallon fuel oil tank. In addition to this tank, a 1,000-gallon tank, two 500-gallon tanks, and one 100-gallon tank were removed. Total cost to remove them, refill the area, and replace the concrete was more than \$13,000. Clark Electric later installed a 2,500-gallon fuel oil tank inside the building for heating needs.*

our members consistent with the wise use of resources and technology. We will work with our members to improve the social and economic well being of the region.”

In keeping with these core organizational values, the cooperative leaders of the late 1980s had a vision to expand on the cooperative’s need for increased space into an opportunity for economic development for our area in the form of an industrial park.

In 1988, Clark Electric Cooperative purchased a 65-acre site on the west edge of Greenwood for future economic development in this area. The cooperative was in need of some land to move its pole yard, which for years had been located on railroad right-of-way, so additional acreage was sought for the purpose of development. General Manager Dick Adler noted “that locating an industry is a very difficult undertaking and it may be many years before anything is obtained. We now have the land and will not be held up for prices when a demand for a location is needed. Economic development located anywhere in the rural area helps everyone. Clark Electric Cooperative is willing to work with any group of individuals in locating industries any place on our system.”

### Longtime Line Superintendent Jerry Sowieja Retires After 40 Years

“He loves people and there isn’t anything he wouldn’t do to help someone.” This best describes Jerry Sowieja, who retired at the end of December 1988 after 40 ½ years of service to Clark Electric Cooperative.



*Jerry Sowieja was honored for his 40-plus years of service at a retirement party Dec. 23, 1988. He received a piece of telephone cable that was accidentally cut by our underground construction crew. Bob Trunkel, foreman on that crew, made the presentation. (Note: Cutting through telephone cables does not make line superintendents happy.)*



*Harry Johnson (right) was appointed line superintendent to replace Jerry Sowieja, who retired Dec. 31, 1988. At his left is Bob Moseley, who had been working as operations aide since January 1988. Harry was a lineman, journeyman lineman, operations aide, and assistant superintendent before being named line superintendent.*

#### 1988–1989

**January 7, 1988** – It was reported that the appliance department sold 900 appliances and approximately 40 dual fuel loads were added last year.

**April 6, 1988** – The board of directors approved the purchase of an International Chassis for \$32,070 and a new digger-derrick with utility body for \$70,501. Pole testing was increased from 3,000 poles per year to 4,000 poles per year at a cost of \$8 per pole.

**June 6, 1988** – The board approved a land option to purchase a farm west of Greenwood for a pole yard and possibly an industrial park.

**July 7, 1988** – The board approved hiring part-time meter readers at a cost of \$4 per hour plus .25 cents per meter. In other action, the board approved the purchase of approximately 65 acres west of Greenwood for a price of \$51,800.

**December 2, 1988** – Jerry Sowieja, longtime line superintendent, announces retirement.

#### 1988–1989

**January 6, 1989** – Harry Johnson is appointed line superintendent.

**May 2, 1989** – The board cash rents CECO land for \$26 per acre.

**June 1, 1989** – The cooperative builds new 3 phase line for asphalt plant south of Neillsville.

**July 5, 1989** – The board approves \$1,500 for a High Ground

Memorial Project. Dairyland Power Cooperative also donates \$3,000.

**August 1989** – The board approves the construction of the pole yard. A 2,500 gallon fuel oil tank was installed in the cooperative building. The underground tanks will be removed.

**November 3, 1989** – The cooperative

received recognition from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for safety accreditation. The board approves a donation of \$500 to South Carolina Disaster Fund due to Hurricane Hugo.

**December 5, 1989** – The manager reports that the new pole yard has been completed. Don Fontaine, appliance manager, announces retirement.

*l-r: John Reinart, Richard Eibergen, and Brice Bender were re-elected to the board of directors at the 1989 annual meeting.*



Jerry began working for the cooperative in 1948 as a mechanic. He was offered a chance to become a lineman in 1955. In 1973 he was selected to be line superintendent, following the retirement of Elmer Learman.

Jerry's 40 years of service were filled with many changes in employees, equipment, and working techniques. Jerry always put his job first, even if it meant working longer hours, such as arriving at the office before the crew came in the morning, staying later, and answering the phone during storm-related outages throughout the night.

Jerry served on the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association Job Training and Safety Committee as well as the advisory committee to the Electric Power Distribution Department at the District I Technical School, now Chippewa Valley Technical College. Safety was always a priority for Jerry; in fact, he did save a life while employed at Clark Electric. For his quick thinking and life-saving actions, Jerry was the first recipient of the Herman Potthast award, presented by the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association.

## **Don Fontaine Retires After 37 Years of Service**

The end of December 1989 brought the retirement of Clark Electric's first appliance salesman, Don Fontaine, who later became the appliance department manager and the appliance and member services department manager.

### *Tribute to Don as written in 1990:*

Thirty-seven years ago, a young insurance representative was calling on the cooperative and mentioned to Bill Dallman, the manager of Clark Electric at that time, that he wouldn't be calling on the cooperative anymore because he was seeking employment elsewhere. After a lengthy conversation, Dallman persuaded Don to come to work for the cooperative, selling appliances.

According to Don, selling appliances in the early 1950s was a lot different than selling appliances today.

Don was on the road most every day, demonstrating the appliances' use and talking to people about the modern, convenient uses of electricity. Delivering major and small appliances was a daily routine, and many hours were spent trying to sell small appliances, such as toasters, mixers, and coffee makers, to a member.

It was a long, hard sell to convince the members they were making a good investment when purchasing appliances. Don was a one-person department, with the line crew helping to deliver and install appliances when a sale was made.

To increase sales, Don took it upon himself to order a train car loaded with major appliances and start advertising (he almost lost his job for this). Don thought it was a matter of survival; he thought the cooperative had to get into the business on a more aggressive basis or discontinue, but he had to prove himself first. Well, the first load of appliances went fast, and he was authorized to order more loads as needed. Don built the business to what it is today — the largest major appliance dealer in the area, with annual sales approaching 900–1,000 pieces con-



*During a luncheon, Don Fontaine reads some of the cards he received upon his retirement as appliance salesman. At left is Alvina Drumm, appliance sales clerk.*

sisting of ranges, refrigerator, washers, dryers, freezers, microwaves, and dishwashers.

Another major undertaking for Don was the installation of electric heating in member homes. In the late 1950s, the cooperative began promoting electric heat. In the mid 1980s the cooperative had taken on sales as well as installation and repair of ground water heat pumps, the ultimate low-cost heating and cooling option.



*Director Ralph Woik (l) with Don Fontaine. Don retired as appliance manager in December 1989.*

## Capital Credit Refund \$5 Million Milestone Reached

The 1991 capital credit refund for the year 1971 was issued on January 2, 1991. More than \$326,000 was issued, making the total refunds since 1959 more than \$5,000,000. This is quite a milestone for an organization that was never supposed to be able to serve the electrical needs of our rural members. In the late 1930s, the investor-owned utilities said it couldn't be done — there wasn't enough money in it. With the help of the rural electrification loan program (which was available to the IOUs also if they would have provided area coverage) the members of Clark Electric Cooperative, the dedicated board of directors, and some excellent employees over the years proved them wrong.

Over the years, the rates of Clark Electric and the area IOUs have been very competitive. In the early 1960s, our rates were considerably lower. In the late 1970s our rates were higher. Today, our rates are higher than some and lower than others. The main concern of the cooperative is the service that is rendered to the members. The goal of the cooperative has always been to provide reliable, competitively priced energy and maximum value to our membership.

## All Systems Go for Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS)

*As authored by Dick Adler in 1992*

After considerable study and discussion, the board of directors of Clark Electric Cooperative have approved a considerable investment in the DBS project. We are in the process of purchasing the franchise for all the area we currently serve in as well as Taylor Electric Cooperative, which includes the northern part of Taylor County and the Athens area in Marathon County. Our service area includes all of Clark County, and parts of Chipewewa, Taylor, Marathon, and Wood counties. You can now move to the country and have cable-like TV with you at a reasonable price.



*Dick Adler, general manager, looks over the newest addition to the Clark Electric family of products and services—a DBS dish.*

The overall project will take some time as the satellite will be launched in December 1993 and service will be available by mid-1994. Clark Electric



*The 1991–92 officers of the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) board of directors were (l-r) Vice President Robert Kretzschmar, of Bayfield Electric; President Louis Dux, of Clark Electric; and Secretary–Treasurer Howard Trescher, of Rock County Electric.*

has been a member of the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC) located in Washington, D.C., for a number of years now. We have been selling Rural TV programming packages to almost 200 area people.

The launch of this satellite will be reminiscent of the early days of electricity. In the late 1930s, when the power companies failed to extend electric power to the rural area, electric cooperatives were formed to do the job themselves. Again, it hasn't been profitable enough for cable television to extend into rural areas, so now the cooperative movement will do it again.

It's hard to believe that electricity was a luxury in the 1930s. Today, electricity is a critical need and eventually DBS television will be also. There are some exciting days ahead.

\* \* \*

Mr. Adler was indeed correct. DirecTV exceeded all of our wildest expectations. At one point, we had over 7,800 subscribers. We are very proud of our role in bringing television to rural areas. Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite Inc. offered DirecTV until 2011 when our contract with DirecTV expired.

## Clark Electric Cooperative is a Founding Member of Cooperative Response Center

In December of 1992, Clark Electric Cooperative, along with 18 other Midwest electric cooperatives, founded the Cooperative Response Center (CRC) located in Austin, Minnesota. CRC was founded to provide two main functions. 1) CRC would begin answering and dispatching after hours calls, and 2) CRC would provide the monitoring for the new MainStreet Messenger Service (emergency medical monitoring and response). Today, CRC has grown to be a nationwide, cooperatively owned and operated, 24/7 contact center, central station, and software provider. Since 1992, CRC has steadily increased in the size and scope of its operation with offices in Austin, Minnesota; Dunlap, Tennessee; and Abilene,



*Louis Dux, left, congratulates Henry Janezich on 25 years of service as appliance serviceman. Henry retired on April 30, 1992.*

Texas. CRC serves 268 electric utilities in 37 states with more than 4.3 million consumers. Clark Electric Cooperative CEO/General Manager Tim Stewart has served on the board of directors of CRC since 2007 and currently holds the office of treasurer.

## Dairyland Power Cooperative Announces the Closing of the E.J. Stoneman Steam Station (1993)

In 1951, the E.J. Stoneman Steam Station was billed as a “huge new plant...the very latest in efficiently

constructed steam plants,” and its dedication was a gala two-day affair.

In 1993, that same facility, which grew over the years with the addition of more generating units, provides only about 1 percent of DPC’s energy requirements, and its closure will mean savings for Dairyland, which supplies wholesale power to 20 Wisconsin rural electric distribution cooperatives. On September 17, 1993, Dairyland officials announced the closing of the E.J. Stoneman Station in Cassville.

That the Stoneman Station is no longer needed attests to the growth



*Greenwood Chamber of Commerce President Phyllis Goeke presents the 1994 Citizen of the Year award to Harland “Puffy” Bergemann.*

### 1989–1996

**December 1989** – Don Fontaine retires after 37 years of service.

**February 1990** – Bill Berg is appointed the CEO at Dairyland Power Cooperative.

**March 7, 1990** – The general manager reports that electrical safety demonstrations have been presented at all area schools.

**July 3, 1990** – Excess land in the CECO park is sold to Gregory Murphy.

**August 1, 1990** – Economic Development Policy 80 is initiated by Dairyland Power. This policy helps provide capital (loans) for new loads locating the cooperative territory.

**September 4, 1990** – Board of directors authorizes \$40,000 to be spent on tree trimming this year.

**January 1991** – Cooperative reaches capital credit milestone – over \$5 million returned to members.

**January 4, 1991** – The general manager reports that the old pole yard has been vacated. The new pole yard in the CECO park is operational.

**March 1991** – A 12-member committee is formed to study the retirement of capital credits to aged members.

**August 1991** – Alvina Drumm and Robert Vesel announce retirement. Alvina completed 15 years of service in the appliance and member service area and Robert completed 14 years of service as the janitor and stock clerk.

**November 1, 1991** – Board discusses offering the MainStreet Messenger service. This service is still be offered by Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite, Inc.

**December 5, 1991** – Board approves the CECO lighted sign to be installed at the CECO business park.

**January 1992** – Pat Krause joins the staff of Clark Electric Cooperative as an office/sales clerk.

**February 5, 1992** – Marty Matousek is hired as the appliance manager and John Koschak is hired for appliance serviceman.

**March 6, 1992** – Two new linemen are hired, Mike Ruff and Kevin Sterland. Mike Ruff is currently Clark Electric Cooperative’s director of operations and Kevin Sterland is currently the assistant line superintendent.

**May 20, 1992** – The first meeting regarding Direct Broadcast Satellite System is held.

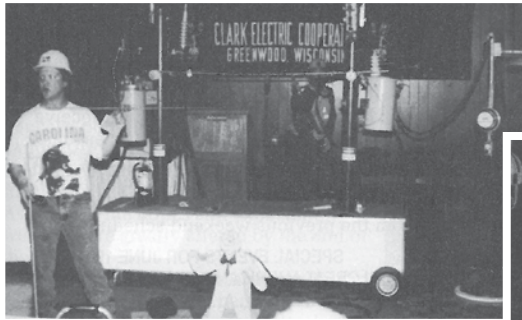
**September 3, 1992** – Board authorizes \$100 donation to Louisiana Cooperative Hurricane Andrew Relief Fund.

**September 16, 1992** – The board of directors approves the purchase the Direct Broadcast Satellite franchise. (This action would later result in Clark Electric Cooperative creating a subsidiary, Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite, Inc., that offered satellite television [DirecTV], one of the most successful business ventures undertaken).

**October 2, 1992** – Board approves the annexation of the CECO park into the City of Greenwood.

**December 1992** – Clark Electric Cooperative becomes a member of the Cooperative Response Center. CRC was formally incorporated the previous month. Clark is one of 19 upper Midwest utilities to form CRC.

of the rural electrification program in the state since the plant was dedicated July 14-15, 1951. At the time, the \$4,500,000 plant had a capacity of 17,250 kW and contained only one unit, although it was built to accommodate five. With the addition of generating units, the plant's capacity swelled to eventually reach 53,000 kW.



Above: Hotline demonstration was presented by Rick Suda (l) and Dan Sturz (in the background). Right: Board President Dick Eibergen (l) recognizes Manager Dick Adler for his 35 years of service.



Left: Past President Louis Dux and former Manager Harland Bergemann review the good old days. Below: Dick Eibergen presents John Reinart a plaque for his nine years on the board.

### 1995 Annual Meeting



### 1989-1996

**March 5, 1993** – Board approves headquarters remodel at a cost of \$121,150.

**May 7, 1993** – Board approves \$10,000 loan guarantee request on behalf of Cooperative Response Center.

**July 2, 1993** – The manager reports that there have been over 800 applications for satellite TV.

**August 5, 1993** – Board approves purchase of the DBS Franchise for Clark, Taylor, Wood, and part of Marathon counties for \$206,000. In other action, Mike Hackel was hired as an appliance serviceman. Mike would later become a journeyman lineman.

**December 3, 1993** – The board selects the name of the subsidiary that was being created. Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite Inc. was chosen. CEAS files its Articles of Incorporation on January 13, 1994.

**January 1994** – Bobbi Toburen is hired as an office clerk.

**March 3, 1994** – Former General Manager Harland Bergeman is honored as Greenwood Citizen of the Year by the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce.

**April 5, 1994** – New computer system and programming through Computer Programming Services, Willmar, Minnesota, is approved. The cooperative would utilize the services of CPS until 2007, at which time the cooperative selected National Information Solutions Cooperative as its software provider.

**June 3, 1994** – DBS loans and assets transferred from Clark Electric Cooperative to Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite, Inc.

**August 1994** – Cooperative purchases adjoining property (Union 76 gas station) to be used as a parking lot. Cooperative engages Ayres and Associates to begin testing and cleanup procedure.

**January 6, 1995** – Cooperative executes first lease agreement with Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite Inc., for use of office, garage, and warehouse space.

**June 2, 1995** – Rita Rybski provides the Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite Inc., report to the board of directors for the first time. The previous manager had resigned March 31, 1995.

**August 3, 1995** – Board of Directors authorizes the general manager to study the possibility of erecting a new headquarters building. The original facility was built in the 1940s. Credit cards were approved for electric payments (first time the cooperative accepted them).

**November 1, 1995** – The first issue of *The Spectrum* is sent out. *The Spectrum* was a quarterly publication that supplemented the *Wisconsin Cooperative Energy News*. The *Spectrum* was published until 2006.

**January 5, 1996** – Board approves a draft bylaw amendment to be presented at the annual meeting that will eliminate the \$4 membership fee and reduce the size of the board of directors from nine to seven. The membership later approved the amendment.

**March 11, 1996** – The board approves the purchase of a Case cable plow in the amount of \$18,625.

**June 12, 1996** – A joint board meeting between Clark Electric Cooperative and Taylor Electric Cooperative is held in Abbotsford to discuss a consolidation study between the organizations. Consolidation talks are discontinued by the end of December 1996.

**August 2, 1996** – The board approves the auditorium building to be closed for public meetings as CEAS needs the facility. Bob Mosely is named operations director.

**October 3, 1996** – Lakehead Pipeline substation is energized.

**December 1996** – Board authorizes the purchase of 16 mobile radios at a cost of \$3,079 each.

# New Challenges & Changes

## Retail Wheeling

**R**etail wheeling, deregulation, and restructuring became popular household words in the 1990s. There were various proposals that would deregulate the electric industry and let electric consumers “shop” for the utility that could give them the best price. On the surface, that sounded good, but unfortunately there is significantly more to the story. The concept of retail wheeling was initiated by large industrial customers in high power cost states (Wisconsin was considered a low-cost state). Their goal was to achieve power as cheaply as possible. However, one potential outcome was that retail wheeling could raise costs to residential, farm, and small commercial users. In addition, power marketers could seek to manipulate the power market in their favor. (Do you remember Enron and what happened there?) The following is an article that was written by Clark Electric Cooperative CEO/GM Dick Adler in September 2000 upon returning from California, a high-cost state that implemented deregulation. The article was entitled “When is Our Day? Our Sympathy to San Diego Rate Payers...”

\* \* \*

While spending three days in San Diego, California, many electric cooperative managers and directors took notice of the local newspaper. “Electric Bills Rise Joltingly,” read the headline on June 29, 2000. The following are quotes from an article written by Craig D. Rose of the *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

- “California’s deregulated electricity market — a ho-hum affair for its first two years — suddenly is firing lightning bolts through San Diego.”
- “A sudden spike in power prices is shocking utility

executives, consumer advocates, political leaders and — most of all — bill payers across the region.”

- “Most experts blame unseasonably hot weather across the Northwest and a rising demand for power. A few also suspect manipulation of power markets.”
- “Price spikes are hitting hardest here because San Diego County is the first region in the nation to experience unregulated power prices. SDG&E now simply passes along the daily price it pays for power to local customers.”
- “State Senator Steve Peace, who co-authored the legislative blueprint for deregulation and supports lower price caps, says the fundamental problem is insufficient supply. Peace calls for granting Gov. Gray Davis emergency powers to push through the construction of new power plants and transmission lines. But Peace added that the current power market is broken. Clearly the market has not matured adequately, in my view. The market is not working. It also has failed to stimulate vigorous competition among power providers. Two years after deregulation, there is arguably less competition than at the start of the process...”
- “Many consumers already have been jolted with bills \$20 higher than those they’ve received in the recent past. That’s mere prelude: San Diego Gas & Electric officials say bills going out this week will jump about \$35 for the average residential customer. And the region is months away from its peak power usage season, when prices traditionally have skyrocketed.”

End of newspaper article, although this is not the entire article. WOW. This is something we’ve discussed for years now in Wisconsin. The 2000 Reliability Bill recently passed encourages growth in building plants and





*Hattie Forman celebrates her 100th birthday with the members of Clark Electric at the 1999 annual meeting.*

extending transmission lines. There is a shortage of both in Wisconsin. We have been lucky through this point.

I hope the legislative people in Washington and Madison heed the problems in

unregulated states. Sure, electricity has been run primarily as a monopoly, but then it resulted in cheap power, reliability, and cooperation among utilities to keep costs lower. When will our day be? Let's not make the same mistakes.

Clark Electric Cooperative will continue to oppose deregulation and retail wheeling as long as it raises the cost of electricity to residential and small commercial users that we serve. Our job as your utility is to keep the cost of electricity as low as possible, while maintaining the reliability of our system.

Fortunately, policymakers heeded these warnings and did not go down the path that some of the high-cost states, like California, did.

## Dall-Berg Road Remembers

The City of Greenwood has many prominent streets named after pioneers and area leaders, such as Schofield, Andrews, Miller, Begley, Hunt, and now Dall-Berg. Dall-



*Back row, Linda Dallman (wife of Allan), Larry Dallman (nephew of Bill Dallman), Bob Barr, Mary Barr, and Greg Stelmacher. Front row: Marion Frick (daughter of Bill Dallman), Harland Bergemann, Evelyn Bergemann, and Salley Stelmacher. Right: The Dall-Berg Road was honored at a celebration on June 11, 1998.*



Berg Road is named in honor of William A. Dallman and Harland Bergemann, pioneers in the rural electrification in Clark and surrounding counties.

Bill Dallman was the first manager of Clark Electric Cooperative, serving from 1937 to 1964, and Harland was office manager from 1938 to 1964 and manager until his retirement in 1978. Rural areas were still without electricity in late 1930s, and with the help of the Rural Electrification Act, which provided low-cost loans, central station electricity was built into rural areas. Bill and Harland were both instrumental in developing rural programs to serve areas with great potential that were discarded by the power companies as not being profitable to serve.

It is indeed appropriate that we honor these two great men who have provided so much to this area. (Dall-Berg Road is located west of Greenwood and leads into the CECO Business Park).

## Incubator Building Almost Completed

Clark Electric Cooperative began construction on a new building in 1998. The west half of the new building is used by Clark Electric for warehouse space. The east half serves as a small business incubator.

What is an incubator? It is a place for business in the beginning growth stages to get a good start, utilizing new facilities with a common office. Rent is made attractive to help the new business get started. Businesses that start off in an incubator building environment have a much greater success rate in achieving in their business goals. The first tenant moved into the facility in the spring of 1999.

## The Bug That Didn't Bite

Do you remember the Y2K scare? This is where all kinds of bad things were going to happen because the computers of the day couldn't handle moving from 1999 to 2000. I remember the claims that the power grid would fail and there would be rioting in the streets.

Well, the biggest story coming out of the year 2000 transition seemed to be that no one suffered stings of the Y2K bug except those with commercial interest in having problems occur. (i.e. computer consultants and the media).

Wisconsin's electric cooperatives reported no

mishaps resulting from the date rollover. The cooperatives had been part of a comprehensive investigation and testing program spanning many months to correct potential computer problems.

## Steel Poles – A Giant Erector Set for Linemen

In the summer of 2000, Clark Electric Cooperative first began using steel poles on a rebuild project near Chili, Wisconsin. The new three-phase line was constructed with steel poles and fiberglass cross arms. The steel poles have a lot to offer. They're lightweight, but are a lot stronger than wood poles. They have a longer life span, will not rot, and do not have to be tested like wood poles do. The average life span of a wood pole is projected to be 40 to 50 years, while a steel pole has a life expectancy of approximately 80 years. In addition, setting up steel poles is also a lot quicker, which enhances the productivity of the crews. Bob Moseley, director of operations at the time, said, "We believe that these poles will be a great asset to the system and to our reliability. While, we don't



expect to stop using wood poles anytime soon, steel poles will be used when appropriate and cost effective."

### Spring Storms do Damage

Mother Nature showed her fury in the early hours of the morning on May 14, 2001, by unleashing powerful storms. One such storm hit our area and did some damage to the distribution system. The storm produced large hail



*Director Ron Schmidt, Line Superintendent Harry Johnson, George Jump of Stell Pole, Inc., Director Jerry Smith, and Director of Operations Bob Moseley all listen as Jump explains the steel poles.*

and heavy rains from Owen, Withee, Abbotsford, Colby, and down to Spencer. The storm blew down several barns and even tipped over two semi-trucks on Hwy. 29.

More than 600 members of Clark Electric's system were without power due to the damage. The system experienced seven broken poles and a number of downed power lines. Taylor Electric Cooperative in Medford sent a crew to assist. Power was restored by early evening on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

### Our Lady of Victory Dedication

The new \$16 million Our Lady of Victory Hospital

#### 1997–2002

**January 7, 1997** – The Board of Directors approves the development of Clark Electric Cooperative's first home page for the Internet.

**February 6, 1997** – Board approves participating in the NRECA Member Satisfaction Survey for the first time.

**March 7, 1997** – Board approves participation in the Electric Coalition of Wisconsin (ECW is an insurance company created by electric cooperatives to provide insurance to electric cooperatives in Wisconsin. Clark was a founding member of the organization).

**July 2, 1997** – John Knox accepts the position of member service director for the cooperative. John

came from Tri County Electric Cooperative of Portland, Michigan. John served Clark Electric Cooperative until February 2010, at which time he joined a cooperative in North Dakota as their CEO/GM.

**November 4, 1997** – CEO Dick Adler reports that over 500 people attended the Cooperative Month luncheon.

**December 3, 1997** – Board approves a new billing statement system and the purchase of Stake Out, thereby automating our engineering process.

**December 16, 1997** – The City of Greenwood creates a TIF District for the CECO Land Development west of Greenwood.

**January 6, 1998** – Cooperative approves the use of the Touchstone Energy Logo.

**May 5, 1998** – Rick Suda is promoted to line superintendent. Rick currently holds the position of assistant line superintendent. In other action, the board approves the construction of the incubator/cold storage building.

**July 11, 1998** – The road leading to the new CECO land development is named Dall-Berg Road, in honor of past General Managers Bill Dallman and Harland Bergemann. A short dedication is held.

**November 5, 1998** – The board approves applying for a Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) loan for the City of Withee. This will later become part of the cooperative's revolving loan fund.

**March 31, 1999** – John Knox, editor of our local pages in the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* receives two statewide awards at the cooperative's Annual Meeting.

**April 6, 1999** – New CECO incubator building is completed. The first tenant of the Incubator building is Greenwood Precision Packaging, Inc.

**August 1999** – Board approves the sale of approximately 1.9 acres in the CECO Land Development Park.

(OLVH) in Stanley held dedication ceremonies in late October 2003. The new hospital went online with transfer of patients, staff, and all services in the middle of November. OLVH is a part of Ministry Health Care, Inc., system, which is one of the state's largest and most trusted medical systems.

Since OLVH is a new member of Clark Electric Cooperative, and because of the sheer magnitude of this project and the importance of the hospital to the communities it serves, the directors of Clark Electric Cooperative felt it was essential to help with construction of the new



*Nick Desien, president and CEO of Ministry Health Care, Inc.; Tony Jarocki, Clark Electric board president; John Knox, director of member services; Cindy Eichman, CEO of Our Lady of Victory Hospital; and Dick Adler, CEO & general manager, with the \$450,000 Rural Development Loan check that Clark Electric obtained to help in construction of the new hospital.*



*Sister Mary Lu Slowey, director for Our Lady of Victory Hospital (OLVH), and Sister Pat Belongia, director of spiritual services at OLVH, cut the dedication ribbon signifying the opening of the new hospital. In the background the audience holds hands to symbolize a human ribbon, tying everyone to the hospital and its success.*

hospital in any way possible. Clark Electric applied for a zero percent interest loan through the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program that helps build and maintain infrastructure in rural areas. Working with the USDA Rural Development staff from Stevens Point, the cooperative was successful in obtaining funding to help bring this very important rural infrastructure and economic boost to our local area. Our Lady of Victory Hospital is a tremendous asset to our local area.

## 1997–2002

### September 3, 1999

– Board approves an economic development loan to a new business locating in the Colby area.

### December 3, 1999:

Board approves membership in Energy Co-opportunity. This organization is developing and marketing fuel cells.

### April 1999 –

Cooperative uses steel poles in construction activities for the first time.

**October 5, 2000** – Board approves Kelps of Stratford, WI, to replace the headquarters roof.

**January 2001** – Cooperatives surpasses the \$10 million dollar mark for capital credits returned to its members.

**March 1, 2001** – Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite, Inc. donates a 25 ft. chest freezer to Indianhead Community Action Agency in Owen.

**May 4, 2001** – Board approves the purchase of approximately 800 automated meter reading meters. This marks one of the earliest ventures into automated meter reading.

**June 2001** – CECO Business Park is resurveyed into four lots, and a 15-lot subdivision for the City of Greenwood. A small portion of land is designated for a possible water tower in the future.

**October 3, 2001** – Board approves the purchase of three defibrillators at a cost of \$3,420 each. These units will be carried in the trucks for use in case of an emergency.

**November 6, 2001** – Board approved raising the Federated Youth Scholarships from \$500 to \$750.

**March 20, 2002** – Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite, Inc., declares a \$150,000 dividend to Clark Electric Cooperative.

**May 7, 2002** – The line extension to Victory Memorial Hospital in Stanley is approved.

**July 2, 2002** – Cooperative adopts the Safety First Farm Wiring and Grant Program to help area dairy farmers. The program is officially kicked off in January 2003.

**September 6, 2002** – Cooperative applies for a second REDLG loan through USDA Rural Development for Victory Memorial Hospital in Stanley.

**December 3, 2002** – Board approves the appliance building roof replacement at a cost of \$33,000.

## Final Words From CEO/GM Dick Adler

In my career, one person has been so influential that I cannot begin to tell how much I learned from him — Harland Bergemann. Harland became general manager in 1964 and we worked very closely for the next 14 years. Harland is the type of people-person who always considers the members and who owned this business first. If an idea wasn't good for the vast majority of the members, it soon disappeared. Working with a union contract was just that — a contract to be abided by. If we or the employees didn't like something, we lived by it and waited to try to change it in the next negotiations. He taught me to listen and not interrupt or interpret before all the facts were known.

Don't try to know it all — that's where the professional engineers, attorneys, state and national organizations can help. Support the organizations that we need for the jobs we can't do by ourselves. Well, Harland and I were a great team, and eventually in the mid '70s he hinted that maybe I should prepare for the general manager position. Oh no, I told him, as I really enjoyed the office routine and the coming of computers and such. Well, in later 1976 we talked again and he said, "I really need to know — give it some thought." Well, I did and the big questions I had was, "Could I work for someone other than Harland Bergemann?" The answer was, "Probably not," so I told him I would go for it.

Harland retired in February 1978 and I have been at the reins since. My office manager then was Marty Hillert Jr. from Granton, who was following my footsteps, learning and studying as he went. Marty eventually left to become a general manager in Minnesota and later became manager of Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative in Friendship, Wisconsin. We still see each other at various meetings and seminars. Yes, we are still learning.

So now I am the CEO/GM, and I continue to be blessed by some great board of directors with leadership



*Dick Adler and the board of directors, shortly before Adler's retirement: Clarence Hoesly, Tony Jarocki, Ron Schmidt, Chuck Bena, Wilmer Griepentrog, Vern Kowalewski, and Howard Schultz.*

*General Manager  
Tim Stewart, left,  
with former General  
Managers Harland  
Bergemann and Dick  
Adler.*



that anyone would envy. Presidents of Clark Electric under whom I served were Louis Dux, Ralph Woik, Dick Eibergen, LeRoy Fravert Jr., and Anthony Jarocki. They, of course, were supported by a host of dedicated directors, all of whom I was proud to be associated with.

The board has been very progressive and cost conscious, always looking out for our members. In tough times and when rates needed to be adjusted, you'd better come prepared and informed. Although rates have been increasing the past number of years, it is for good reason, but we must be watchful as to what the members can afford. Traditionally, electric costs have been way under inflation and that is the reason for only asking for what we really need. Throughout my career, most of the increases have come on the wholesale level; however, inflation hits at our doors just as it does our members.

I have tried diligently to maintain a financially strong organization. We have some of the lowest debts and electric rates of any electric cooperative in Wisconsin. Our system is constantly being rebuilt and maintained to the specifications of the Rural Utility Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Your board of directors has selected Tim Stewart as my successor, and I feel very good about leaving the business guidance to him. We have spent countless hours together these past five months to cause a smooth transition. Tim does have a big job of filling the upcoming retirements that will be occurring in the next couple of years.

So now what? I will not say good-bye. I am not leaving, only now I won't have an office and I will be at the call of Tim Stewart. I will stop in but give no advice unless asked for. What are my plans? Some traveling. I'm on the executive committee for Farm Technology Days in Clark County 2005, on the board of St. Mary's Memorial Fund, coordinator for Greenwood Festivals, Inc., and chairman of the Bransititer's Old Streets of Greenwood Museum.

Special thanks to my management staff: Bob Moseley, director of operations; Donna Abel, office manager; John Knox, director of member relations; Rick Suda, line superintendent; and recently retired Harry Johnson and all the employees. You are doing an outstanding job and

you have made me proud over the years. Eighteen years of achieving safety accreditation is quite an accomplishment, as it is a team effort.

A big thank you to the board of directors — not only the present directors but also those who served in the past. Thank you for the challenge, your kindness, and for not interfering. I always looked forward to board meetings because of the great support I received. You entrusted the operations to me, which were not always perfect, but you gave me the tools to assemble a great staff of people to work for the members and meet their expectations.

Lastly, thank you to the members for your understanding when the lights were out, including the times when there were persistent problems and outages may have occurred more than once in a short period of time. Thank you for all your support at the annual meetings, which I plan to attend in the future. So, I'll be around, only not in the operations. So there is no need to say "good-bye," only "we'll see you again soon."

## Dairyland to Partner in Wausau Plant

Dairyland Power Cooperative announced in January 2005 that it would have a 30-percent ownership share in a new power plant near Wausau, under an agreement between the La Crosse-based generation and transmission cooperative and Green Bay's Wisconsin Public Service Corp.

Subject to regulatory approvals and financing, the agreement, signed at the beginning of December, would provide Dairyland with at least 150 megawatts from the new state-of-the-art coal fired plant, which would be among the cleanest in the nation.

The new plant location is the fourth unit on the Weston power plant site just outside Wausau, where generation facilities have been operating since 1954.

## Farm Technology Days

Farm Technology Days were held at the Malm Rolling Acre farm located in Clark County on July 12–14, 2005. The event drew more than 30,000 to the area to view one of the largest farm shows in the country.

As the host utility, Clark Electric Cooperative has been very busy building the distribution system required for the event. The cooperative had the Touchstone Energy balloon as well as WildBlue Internet trailer used to demonstrate the new Internet technology at the event.

## Electric Co-ops Rise to the Occasion

After Hurricane Katrina's strike against the U.S. Gulf Coast on August 29–31, 2005, Wisconsin's electric cooperatives mounted the largest restoration of power effort in their history. Eighty volunteers from electric cooperatives in Wisconsin went to Franklinton, Louisiana,



*The Touchstone Energy balloon and "Speedy," the WildBlue Internet trailer, were on hand at the 2005 Farm Technology Days held at the Malm Rolling Acre farm.*

60 miles north of New Orleans. There, they joined hundreds of other volunteers from other states to rebuild the Washington-St. Tammany Electric Cooperative (WST), a large rural electric cooperative whose system was nearly completely destroyed by the hurricane. The cooperative provides power to nearly 100,000 people. The day after Katrina struck, nearly all of those people were without power, and 3,500 miles of electric line were destroyed.

Activating mutual aid agreements that exist among all 900 electric cooperatives in the United States, WST requested help from Wisconsin's electric cooperatives. On September 6, the first group of Wisconsin cooperative employees departed in a convoy of heavy line trucks and equipment on the 1,350-mile trip to Washington Parish. The Wisconsin volunteers and hundreds of others slept on cots in a 300-person tent equipped with a field kitchen and other facilities. The cooperative line crews from Wisconsin were assigned to build some of the heaviest electrical construction used by a distribution utility: double-circuit 336 mcm (very heavy gauge) three-phase conductor. Crews en-



*Linemen Jeff Block, Ken Martini, Scott Bailen, Mike Hackel, and Troy Bauer volunteered to go to Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina and help restore power to thousands of people.*

countered huge, fallen trees, some 3 feet wide and 60–80 feet tall, strewn across roads. Unrelenting 95-degree heat, high humidity, insects, snakes, gas leaks, and many other hazards and impediments were encountered.

In mid-September, line crews from Wisconsin were voted the top-performing crews among nearly 1,000 line workers assisting in the rebuilding effort. The following are some quotes from Billy Gibson of the Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association in Baton Rouge, Louisiana:

“I left a meeting with the Wisconsin line workers wondering what a great place Wisconsin must be, and regretting that I didn’t get a chance to shake the hand of every man in camp. I also wish they could all stay because over the next months and years my state is going to need men who know how to roll up their sleeves and put in a hard day’s work — men who not only are completely unafraid of meeting a challenge but actually welcome the opportunity to step up and take the test.”

“We’ve seen our share of hardship here in Louisiana, but I think we might just make it — thanks to folks like the linemen from your great state of Wisconsin. We’ll never forget the sacrifice you made to help us.”

Clark Electric Cooperative was one of 14 electric cooperatives in Wisconsin to send line workers to Washington-St. Tammany Electric Cooperative in Franklinton, Louisiana. We have shown that the cooperative spirit can not be dimmed; it shines brightly even in the face of darkness and despair. Linemen Jeff Block, Ken Martini, Scott Bailen, Mike Hackel, and Troy Bauer volunteered to work in Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina and helped

restore power to thousands of people. The line workers who helped to restore power to this area were to become known as Franklinton’s Heroes.

## Clark Electric Hosts Statewide Kickoff to Cooperative Month (2006)

Cooperatives — member-owned businesses that promote self-help, democratic control, economic benefit, and other values for their members — annually raise awareness of such positive attributes during October Cooperative Month celebrations.

Clark Electric Cooperative became the Wisconsin cooperative business to host the official state kickoff in 2006 — an observance highlighted by presentation of a governor’s proclamation that formally designates October as Cooperative Month in Wisconsin.

Held in conjunction with Clark Electric’s annual member appreciation day at Greenwood, the 2006 event was co-hosted by Heartland Cooperative Services and North Hendren Co-op Dairy. It drew an estimated 1,000 participants.

Local cooperative members, supporters, and their families enjoyed a free pancake breakfast and entertainment for the children. Clark Electric employees presented hotline demonstrations and offered electrical safety tips. In addition, local firefighters also used the event to promote Fire Prevention Week, area EMTs provided blood pressure checks, and the local hospital distributed community health awareness materials.

Since the 1950s, a prime ingredient of Wisconsin’s

### 2003–2006

**January 2003** – Donated \$1,000 for welcome signs for City of Greenwood.

The members of the Board of Directors all receive the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate. This marks the first time that all seven directors are certified as a CCD at one time.

Safety First, a state-wide loan and grant program, is initiated. The purpose is to assist dairy farmers with the cost of rewiring projects and to promote safety.

**April 2, 2003** – Howard Schultz and Charles Bena are elected to the Board of Directors.

**May 7, 2003** – Dick Adler notifies the board of his intent to retire January 5, 2005. Board starts the recruitment process in September 2003.

**December 3, 2003** – Board approves investment of \$20,000 into CRC.

**May 7, 2004** – Board hires Tim Stewart as CEO/GM. Stewart begins his duties July 27, 2004.

**June 2004** – The Wisconsin Public Service Commission rules in Clark Electric Cooperative’s favor to continue serving Our Lady of Victory Hospital at Stanley. Xcel Energy filed a complaint against the cooperative with the PSC because they felt the area where the new hospital was built belonged to their service area.

Greenwood Fire and Ambulance presents the board a plaque in appreciation of the support that Clark Electric Cooperative provides in allowing employees to respond to emergencies.

**December 2004** – Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite Inc., creates and endows the Adler-Clark Electric Community Commitment Foundation. The Foundation was established to strengthen local communities by helping not-for-profit and community organizations fund projects that will enhance the quality of life of local residents of this area.

**January 2005** – CEO/GM Dick Adler retires after almost 45 years of service.

**February 1, 2005** – Board approves nine bylaw amendments for consideration at the next annual meeting (all amendments pass).

**March 4, 2005** – The classroom is completed in the incubator building and has a tenant ready to move in.

**April 26, 2005** – The Farm Technology electric infrastructure is installed. Mike Ruff is appointed director of operations and Kevin Sterland is appointed assistant line superintendent.

Secretary of Agriculture  
Rod Nilsestuen (r)  
presents the Co-op Month  
proclamation to General  
Manager Tim Stewart  
at the 2006 Statewide  
Kickoff to Cooperative



observance is a gubernatorial proclamation. Performing the honors on Governor Jim Doyle's behalf was Wisconsin Agriculture Secretary Rod Nilsestuen, who used the occasion to trumpet cooperatives' many services and products, while describing the distinctive organization of the member-owned corporations.

"Cooperatives are important because they are created and controlled by the people who use their services," Nilsestuen said. He noted how cooperative businesses of all types — electric, telephone, farm supply, dairy, financial, insurance, housing, consumer, and other cooperatives — have a long and successful track record of meeting the needs and improving the lives of citizens throughout the state.

Accepting the plaque from Nilsestuen was Tim Stewart, CEO and general manager of Clark Electric Cooperative. Stewart pointed out the state theme for Cooperative Month, "The Cooperative Difference," emphasizing how cooperatives are motivated by service to their members, not by profit.

## Adler-Clark Electric Community Commitment Foundation

In the December 2006 issue of the *Rural Electric Magazine*, a national industry publication, The Adler-Clark Electric Community Commitment Foundation was featured in an article entitled "Giving Back to the Community."

The purpose of the ACE Foundation is to support programs and events that enrich the lives of people of Clark County and the surrounding area communities. Our mission is to invest in the future of the Clark County area by helping create opportunity for philanthropy and community enrichment.

The foundation was established in 2004 by Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite, Inc., to strengthen local communities by helping not-for-profit and

*The board of directors gathered at a co-op rally at the State Capital in 2006. Front to back: Clarence Hoesly, Tony Jarocki, Wilmer Griepentrog, Jeremy Baxter, Ron Schmidt, Chuck Bena, and Howard Schultz.*



### 2003–2006

**June 28, 2005** – Board approves changing the corporate color on line trucks from yellow to white.

**August 25, 2005** – Board approves changing Cooperative Month Member Appreciation Day to a weekend breakfast format with a focus on the entire family. (Attendance topped over 975 this year).

**September 30, 2005** – Clark Electric receives a request for assistance from Washington St. Tammany Electric Cooperative in Franklinton, Louisiana, due to Hurricane Katrina. Lineman Jeff Block, Scott Bailen, Troy Bauer, Mike Hackel, and Ken Martini participate in the restoration effort.

**October 2005** – Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite Inc. declares a \$200,000 dividend to Clark Electric Cooperative.

**December 2005** – Clark Electric Cooperative becomes a member of National Information Solutions Cooperative. This is an organization that provides data processing and other services for the nations electric and telephone cooperatives.

**February 28, 2006** – Board approves the use of the NRECA logo for all line trucks. (First time this was used as corporate identity for vehicles).

**July 25, 2006** – Board approves Clark Electric's participation in the Workers Compensation Group Retention Plan. (This is a group of Wisconsin Electric Cooperatives coming together to save on insurance costs).

**August 2006** – Restoration Of Power in an Emergency (ROPE) program is activated. Clark sends two linemen and equipment to help Price Electric restore service to its members.

**October 7, 2006** – Clark Electric Cooperative is selected to host the Statewide Kickoff to Cooperative Month. State Agriculture Secretary Rod Nilsestuen presents the 2006 gubernatorial proclamation launching October Cooperative month in Wisconsin.

**October 31, 2006** – CEO Stewart reports that the TS 2 metering system is 99% installed. Installation of the system began in 2005.

**December 2006** – The Adler-Clark Electric Community Commitment Foundation is featured in the *Rural Electric Magazine*, a national industry publication.

Wilmer Griepentrog and Clarence Hoesly are the first two directors to achieve Board Leadership Certification.

community organizations fund projects that will enhance the quality of life of local residents of this area. To date, (2012) the foundation has awarded \$248,375 for community enrichment projects.

## The First Two Directors Obtain Board Leadership Certification

In an era of ever-increasing complexity of the electric utility industry, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association designed the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) program and the Board Leadership program for electric co-op directors. The curriculum for the CCD Program includes board governance, financial decision-making, and strategic planning. The Board Leadership program is a more in-depth study of issues facing the industry and is attained after successful completion of the CCD program. In 2006, Wilmer Griepentrog and Clarence Hoesly were the first Clark Electric directors to successfully complete the Board Leadership program.



*Clarence Hoesly and Wilmer Griepentrog were the first Clark Electric directors to earn NRECA Board Leadership certification.*

board governance, financial decision-making, and strategic planning. The Board Leadership program is a more in-depth study of issues facing the industry and is attained after successful completion of the CCD program. In 2006, Wilmer Griepentrog and Clarence Hoesly were the first Clark Electric directors to successfully complete the Board Leadership program.

## Dairyland Power Cooperative Begins Major Projects (2007)

Dairyland Power Cooperative began several major projects in 2007. The first was to retrofit its 380-mw Genoa Station #3 and 400-mw John P. Madgett Station with state-of-the-art environmental control equipment that will result in significant air emission reductions. More than \$250 million has been included in Dairyland's budget for current and future emissions control work. Construction has begun to install fabric filter "baghouses" at each plant to remove particulate matter from the exhaust gas stream



*Baghouse construction began at Dairyland Power's Genoa plant in 2007.*

following the coal combustion process.

The dismantlement process at the La Crosse Boiling Water Reactor (LACBWR) continues as DPC has contracted with a national radioactive waste services contractor to facilitate the removal and disposal of LACBWR's reactor pressure vessel (RPV) and other low-level, non fuel waste. The RPV will be removed and shipped to a repository in Barnwell, South Carolina, by June 2007. Completion of this project is a key step in the continuing LACBWR decommissioning process. Dairyland's next project at the shut-down nuclear facility will involve removing spent fuel from wet storage in the fuel pool and placing it into an on-site passive dry cask storage system. (This was completed in 2012).

## Directors Obtain Board Leadership Certifications (2007)

In this era of ever-increasing complexity of the electric utility industry, it is more important than ever for cooperative directors to have the knowledge and skills to govern today's cooperative. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association has designed the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) program and the Board Leadership program to address learning needs of electric cooperative directors. The curriculum for the CCD certification provides information on board governance, financial decision-making, strategic planning, and current and emerging issues. The Board Leadership certification is a more in-depth study of the issues facing the industry and is attained after successfully completing the required credits and the CCD program.



*For the first time, all seven directors received the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate at once in 2003.*

## Weston Plant Up and Running (2008)

Full commercial operation is not expected until summer 2008, but the new 531-mw unit at the Weston power plant is virtually completed. Dairyland Power Cooperative has a 30-percent — or 159-mw — share in the ownership of the plant. Chuck Sans Crainte, DPC vice-president for generation, said, "This state-of-the-art plant will help DPC meet our commitment to providing our membership with a reliable, clean energy supply."





NRECA CEO Glenn English (left) with Clark Electric directors who achieved Board Leadership certifications in 2007.

## Director Tony Jarocki Retires After 32 Years of Service

Tony Jarocki served the members of Clark Electric Cooperative for 32 years. Tony was first elected in 1973. While on the Clark board, Tony served on the Executive Committee first as secretary–treasurer (1978–1981), then as vice president (1977; 1987–1993; 1998) and then as president (1999–2006). Tony was instrumental in the formation of Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite Inc., and served as one of the original incorporators of the company.

### In Closing

As we bring this history series to a close, I would like to offer a few observations that I noted as I was compiling the research that resulted in these articles. First and foremost, the formation of Clark Electric Cooperative was truly a “work of many hands.” The vision and

commitment to electrify our rural region and improve the quality of life of rural residents was truly exceptional. When most said it couldn’t be done, members banded together and did it. They adhered to some basic cooperative principles: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members’ Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training, and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community. These are the same principles we adhere to today.

Secondly, the people of Clark, Chippewa, Jackson, Marathon, Taylor, and Wood counties built a strong organization through cooperation. In many instances, it was the people of our area who led the way in solving the many obstacles that seemed to arise, not only on the local level but in many instances the state and even the national level. The cooperative has been blessed with dedicated and talented directors and employees who always strived to put the interest of the members first.

Thirdly, it is important to tell our story and remember how and why electricity was brought to our rural areas. Today, most members don’t recall “when the lights came on.” They think it’s always been here. These newer members need to understand that it’s the cooperative principles and the cooperative business model that keep electricity reliable and affordable in our sparsely populated areas.

Lastly, a special thank you to Directors Tony Jarocki and Chuck Bena for aiding in the research required in this undertaking. They spent countless hours poring over documents that made my task easier.

2007–2012		2007–2012	
<p><b>April 30, 2007</b> – Board authorizes the request for the Hull Substation.</p> <p><b>June 2007</b> – CEO/GM Tim Stewart is elected to the Cooperative Response Center’s Board of Directors.</p> <p><b>August 2007</b> – Restoration Of Power in an Emergency (ROPE) program was activated. Clark sent two linemen and equipment to aid Oakdale Electric restore service to its members.</p>	<p><b>April 30, 2008</b> – New phone system is installed, resulting in significant savings.</p> <p><b>July 30, 2008</b> – Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite Inc., declares a \$200,000 dividend to Clark Electric Cooperative.</p> <p><b>August 25, 2008</b> – Board approves participation in the state program Focus on Energy effective January 1, 2009.</p> <p><b>November 2008</b> – Clark Electric Cooperative interconnects with a methane digester. The facility is expected to generate about 500 kW, capable of powering 336 average homes.</p>	<p><b>March 26, 2010</b> – The cooperative receives a no lost time award from Federated Rural Electric Insurance.</p> <p><b>May 2010</b> – Clark Electric Cooperative receives the Rural Electric Safety Accreditation Certification. The cooperative has been safety accredited since 1989.</p> <p><b>May 27, 2010</b> – The cooperative conducts a customer satisfaction survey and receives a score of 83. This is the highest score the cooperative has received to date and is significantly higher than the electric industry score.</p> <p><b>August 27, 2010</b> – Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite Inc., declares another \$200,000 dividend to Clark Electric Cooperative.</p> <p><b>November 30, 2010</b> – Board changes the youth scholarship program from a \$750 award to \$1,000 award.</p>	<p><b>June 30, 2011</b> – Board approves moving to paperless board meeting format via electronic means.</p> <p><b>December 2011</b> – Board authorizes a preliminary study for new facilities to be located in the CECO business park.</p> <p><b>February 29, 2012</b> – Exede, high-speed Internet via satellite, is introduced as the successor to Wild Blue and is being well received by the membership.</p> <p><b>April 12, 2012</b> – The cooperative holds its 75th Annual Meeting of the members exactly 75 years from the first Annual Meeting held April 12, 1937.</p> <p><b>September 29, 2012</b> – Member Appreciation Day celebration hits record attendance as over 1,050 member and guests attend the event.</p>



Clark Electric Linemen Mike Hackel and Josh Burns achieved journeyman linemen status in 2007.



Left: 2007 Youth Leadership Congress delegates were (front row l-r) Amelia Pucker, Steve Lenz, Jason Hansen, Melinda Mueller, (back row) Rachel Taylor, Cole Rasmussen, and Andrew Gaede.



Left, below, and right: Hot-line safety demonstrations, giant inflatables, and pumpkin decorating are regular features of the cooperative's popular Member Appreciation Day event held each October.



Above right: Clark Electric CEO Tim Stewart was named to the WECA board in 2010. Below: The Pine Valley Substation was upgraded in 2012.



Above left: Director of Operations Mike Ruff presented a safety training to First Responders in 2007. Above center: Former Clark Electric manager Harland Bergemann celebrated his 100th birthday in January 2008. He passed away in 2009. Left: In 2010 Jarred Martens and Kent Weigel achieved journeyman lineman status.



# Cooperative Roll Call of Employees

## As of December 31, 2012 (Full Time, Retired)

Name	Position	Dates of Service
W.A. "Bill" Dallman	General Manager	1937-1964
H.M. "Harland" Bergemann	Bookkeeper	1938-1978
	Office Manager	
	General Manager	
Elmer Learman	Line Foreman	1938-1972
	Line Superintendent	
Robert Schneider	Lineman	1938-1976
	Line Foreman	
Alexander Poznanski	Lineman	1943-1976
Leon Kuester	Lineman	1940-1978
	Line Foreman	
Alfred Zillmer	Lineman	1941-1974
	Digger Operator	
Oscar Brandt	Truck Driver	1946-1969
Lewis Walde	Digger Operator	1946-1981
	Truck Driver	
Harold Blasch	Meterman/Lineman	1948-1982
Jerome Sowieja	Mechanic	1948-1989
	Lineman	
	Line Superintendent	
Anton "Tony" Rychnovsky	Meterman/Lineman	1949-1984
John Mortl	Janitor/Stock Clerk	1949-1958
Donald Fontaine	Salesman	1952-1990
	Appliance & Member Services Manager	
Julia Koci	Ass't. Bookkeeper	1954-1970
John Zagozen	Appliance Serviceman	1956-1976
Irma Coates	Home Consultant	1956-1970
Richard Syth	Appliance Serviceman	1957-1993
Herman Metzke	Janitor/Stock Clerk	1958-1977
Edwin Degenhardt	Lineman	1958-1989
Richard Adler	Office Clerk	1960-2005
	Office Manager	
	General Manager	
Larry Dallman	Lineman	1964-2004
	Equipment Operator	
Harry Johnson	Lineman	1966-2004
	Operations Aide	
	Ass't. Line Superintendent	
	Line Superintendent	
Donna Abel	Office Clerk	1961-Present
	Bookkeeper	
	Office Manager	
Henry Janezich	Appliance Serviceman	1967-1992
Robert Moseley	Lineman	1969-2005
	Ass't Line Superintendent	
	Director of Operations	
Delmar Toburen	Equipment Operator	1969-1982
Richard Braun	Lineman	1969-2005
Kenneth Martini	Lineman	1972-2010
Robert Trunkel	Lineman	1972-2009

Arnold Kappus	Appliance Salesman	1974-2006
	Equipment Operator	
	Janitor/Stock Clerk	
Linda McAley	Office Clerk	1973-Present
	Customer Service Rep.	
	Ass't. Bookkeeper	
	Accounting/Data Supervisor	
Alvina Drumm	Sales Clerk	1976-1992
Robert Vesel	Janitor/Stock Clerk	1977-1991
Sandra Herrick	Office Clerk	1978-Present
	Customer Service Rep	
	Operations Aide	
Rita Sladich	Stenographer	1977-1993
	Customer Service Rep.	
Frank Arch	Equipment Operator	1978-2008
James Rust	Equipment Operator	1978-2006
Gary French	Meterman/Lineman	1979-Present
Rick Suda	Equipment Operator	1981-Present
	Lineman	
	Line Superintendent	
Daniel Sturz	Lineman	1985-Present
	Meterman	
Tracy Nelson	Office Clerk	1986-Present
	Customer Service Rep	
	Administrative Ass't.	
Jeffrey Block	Lineman	1986-Present
Warren Luedtke	Lineman	1989-Present
Pat Krause	Customer Service Rep.	1991-Present
Michael Ruff	Lineman	1992-Present
	Director of Operations	
Kevin Sterland	Lineman	1992-Present
	Ass't. Line Superintendent	
Michael Hackel	Lineman	1993-Present
Bobbi Toburen	Customer Service Rep.	1993-Present
Amber Reddy	Customer Service Rep.	1996-Present
Cathy Langreck	Customer Service Rep.	1998-Present
Chad Steffen	Lineman	2002-Present
Scott Bailen	Lineman	2002-Present
Josh Burns	Lineman	2002-Present
Timothy Stewart	CEO/General Manager	2004-Present
James Mertens	Master Electrician	2004-Present
Pat Susa	Warehouse Utility Man	2005-Present
Matt Wiese	Lineman	2005-Present
Kent Weigel	Lineman	2006-Present
Jarred Martens	Lineman	2006-Present

## Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite, Inc. (Full Time, Retired)

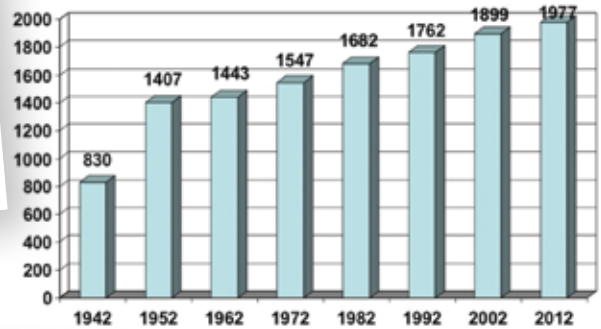
Rita Sladich	Exec. V.P. of Operations	1994-Present
Michelle Walde	Appliance Ass't. Sales Manager	1995-Present
Ryan Nielsen	Appliance Serviceman	2000-Present
	Appliance/Geothermal Tech	
Greg Shaw	Appliance/Geothermal Tech	2002-Present

# Cooperative Roll Call of Directors

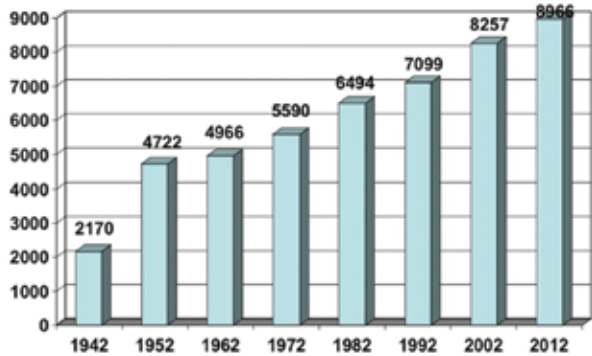
VERN G. HOWARD .....	1937-1958; 1962-1971	NORMAN MEISSNER .....	1972-1981
President 1937 -1939; 1940-1943; 1944-1958		NORMAN MELLENTIN .....	1976-1982
Vice President 1939-1940; 1943-1944		RALPH WILL .....	1977-1986
Director, Dairyland Power Cooperative 1943-1967		Director, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association 1982-1986	
MARTIN KLARICH .....	1937-1943	DALE SHORT .....	1977-1986
President 1939-1940		Vice President 1982-1984	
Vice President 1937-1939; 1940-1941		GARY SCHULTZ .....	1978-1981
WALLACE LANDRY .....	1937-1943	FRED GRAP, JR. ....	1982-1985
Secretary-Treasurer 1937-1941; 1942-1943		RALPH WOIK .....	1962-1974; 1975-1987
Director, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative 1937-1943		President 1967-1974; 1982-1987	
Director, Dairyland Power Cooperative 1942-1943		Vice President 1978-1982	
Director, Wisconsin Power Cooperative 1937-1941		Secretary-Treasurer 1963-1967; 1989-1996	
L. T. KLEIN .....	1937-1951	Director, Dairyland Power Cooperative 1977-1987	
C. F. BALDWIN .....	1937-1938	Director, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association 1967-1974	
ED KLEIN .....	1937-1957	BRICE BENDER .....	1968-1977; 1986-1990
Vice President 1944-1957		President 1974-1977	
Director, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative 1943-1957		Secretary-Treasurer 1969-1974	
REX COPPER .....	1937-1951	Director, Dairyland Power Cooperative 1969-1977; 1987-1990	
Secretary-Treasurer 1941-1942; 1943-1951		ELDORE HUMKE .....	1968-1978; 1981-1989
GUSTIVE H. VOIGHT .....	1937-1944	Vice President 1974-1976	
President 1942 - 1944		Secretary-Treasurer 1976-1978; 1981-1987; 1988	
MILTON F. PAGE .....	1937-1940	Director, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association 1969-1977	
J.H. LANGFELDT .....	1938-1947	LOUIS DUX .....	1973-1982; 1985-1993
JOHN BARTH .....	1940-1958; 1961-1962	President 1977-1982; 1987-1993	
S. J. PLAUTZ .....	1943-1949	Vice President 1976-1977	
CHARLES F. WITT .....	1943-1950	Director, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association 1978-1982; 1987-1993	
GEORGE H. HUMKE .....	1944-1957	ANTHONY JAROCKI .....	1973-1981; 1985-1993; 1997-2011
WILLARD GERHARDT .....	1947-1956	President 1999-2006	
MIKE KRULTZ, SR. ....	1949-1957	Vice President 1977; 1987-1993; 1998	
L. F. LOUCKS .....	1950-1956; 1957-1962	Secretary-Treasurer 1978-1981	
Secretary-Treasurer 1951-1956; 1957-1961		RICHARD EIBERGEN .....	1981-1986; 1988-1997
IRVING GOESSL .....	1951-1959	President 1994-1997	
SABIAN SCHERF .....	1951-1957	Director, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association 1986-1987; 1994-1995	
Secretary-Treasurer 1956-1957		PETER FLASHINSKI .....	1981-1987
DAVID KRUTSCH .....	1956-1962; 1963-1972	EDWARD BREHM .....	1982-1988
President 1958-1962		Vice President 1984-1987	
Vice President 1957-1958		JOHN REINART .....	1986-1994
RILAY NEUMAN .....	1956-1962	RONALD BAXTER .....	1987-1995
Director, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative 1957-1962		ROBERT WILL .....	1987-1995
GLENN HORN .....	1957-1962	Vice President 1994-1996	
Secretary-Treasurer 1961-1962		Director, Dairyland Power Cooperative 1991-1996	
MILFRED WENZEL .....	1957-1960	LEROY FRAVERT JR. ....	1990-1998
AUGUST STREMIKIS .....	1957-1967; 1976-1985	President 1998	
President 1962-1967		Vice President 1996-1997	
Vice President 1957-1962		STANLEY SCHULTZ .....	1991-1995
Director, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative 1962-1966		LAVERNE EHLERS .....	1995
GERHARD KLEIN .....	1958-1967	HENRY JANEZICH .....	1994-2002
KENNETH BOBB .....	1958-1961	Director, Dairyland Power Cooperative 1997-2002	
ARNOLD BAKKE .....	1959-1968	GERALD SMITH .....	1994-2002
Vice President 1962-1968		Secretary-Treasurer 1997-2003	
SIDNEY SVENSON .....	1960-1969	VERNON KOWALEWSKI .....	1996-2004
Vice President 1968-1969		RONALD SCHMIDT .....	1996-present
WILLIAM BAYUK .....	1967-1976	Vice President 1999-2013	
Vice President 1969-1974		CLARENCE HOESLY .....	1998-2012
Secretary-Treasurer 1974-1976		Secretary-Treasurer 2003-2011	
Director, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association 1974-1976		Secretary-Treasurer 2012	
HERMAN KLEIN .....	1967-1971	Director, Dairyland Power Cooperative 2003-2011	
WALTER NEUMAN .....	1962-1962	WILMER GRIEPENTROG .....	1999-present
JOHN BALCER .....	1962-1973	President 2006-2013	
DELMAR TOBUREN .....	1962-1969	Director, Dairyland Power Cooperative 2012-2013	
Secretary-Treasurer 1967-1969		HOWARD SCHULTZ .....	2003-2011
Director, Dairyland Power Cooperative 1967-1969		CHARLES BENA .....	2003-present
Employee 1969-1982		Secretary-Treasurer 2011 .....	
JULIUS ROHLAND .....	1969-1975	Secretary-Treasurer 2012-2013	
ARVIN PODEVELS .....	1971-1972; 1974-1976	JEREMY BAXTER .....	2005-present
R. J. DIETRICH .....	1971-1977	HERMAN SEEBANDT .....	2012-present
		MARVIN VERKUILEN .....	2012-present



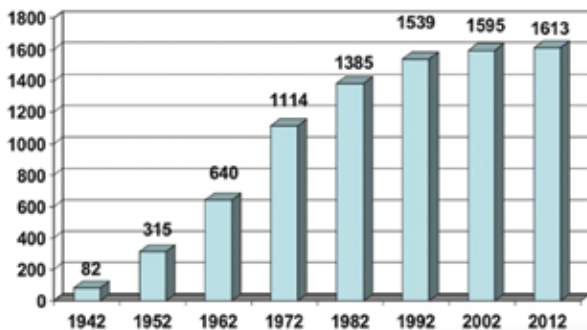
## Miles Energized



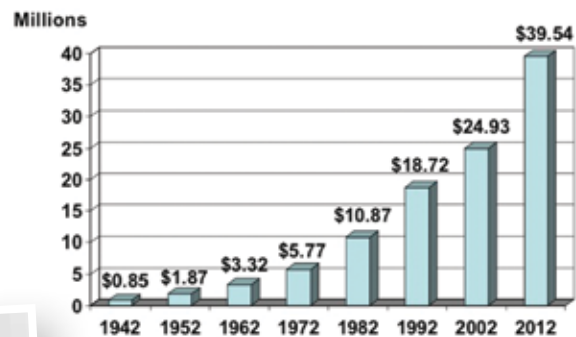
## Number of Billed Members



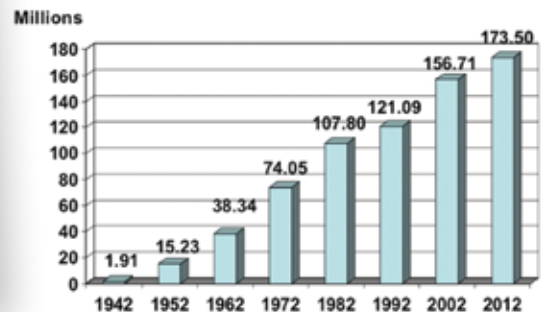
## Average kWh Sold per Member per Month



## Total Assets



## kWh Sold



## Clark Electric Cooperative Employees

*Right—Back row, left to right: Cathy Langreck, Amber Reddy, Bobbi Toburen, Tracy Nelson, and Pat Krause. Front row: Donna Abel, Tim Stewart, and Linda McAley.*



*Below—Back row, left to right: Kent Weigel, Jim Mertens, Gary French, Warren Luedtke, and Jeff Block. Front row: Josh Burns, Mike Hackel, Sandy Herrick, Dan Sturz, Chad Steffen, Pat Susa, Matt Wiese, Rick Suda, Scott Bailen, Jared Martens, Kevin Sterland, and Mike Ruff.*



## Clark Electric Appliance & Satellite Employees

*Left to right: Greg Shaw, Rita Sladich, Michelle Walde, and Ryan Nielsen.*

## Clark Electric Cooperative Board of Directors



**Wilmer Griepentrog**  
*President*  
1999–Present  
Town of Sherman



**Ronald Schmidt**  
*Vice President*  
1996–Present  
Town of Brighton



**Charles Bena**  
*Secretary–Treasurer*  
2003–Present  
Town of Mead



**Herman Seebandt**  
*Director*  
2012–Present  
Town of Weston



**Marvin Verkuilen**  
*Director*  
2012–Present  
Town of Wordon



**Jeremy Baxter**  
*Director*  
2005–Present  
Town of Holway



**Clarence Hoesley**  
*Director*  
2003–2012  
Town of York

## Clark Electric Appliance & Satellite, Inc. Board of Directors



**Wilmer Griepentrog**  
*Chairman*



**Tim Stewart**  
*President*



**John Zuelke**  
*Vice President*



**Charles Bena**  
*Secretary–Treasurer*



**Henry Janezich**  
*Director*



**Patricia Nelson**  
*Director*



**Dr. John Scaletta**  
*Director*

