



Tim Stewart, CEO/Manager

Capital Credit Retirement

52nd Consecutive Year of Benefits from Your Cooperative Demonstrating the Third Cooperative Principle

It is my privilege to announce that the Clark Electric Cooperative Board of Directors approved a \$726,027 capital credit general retirement to be made this year. This marks the 52nd consecutive year that a capital credit retirement has been made, totaling in excess of \$21,618,000 being returned to the membership since inception.

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.

Capital credits are returned to cooperative members on a rotating schedule. Currently the cooperative is retiring 4 percent of its allocated capital and applying that amount against the oldest capital credits assigned to the members. This retirement will affect the cooperative's capital credits assigned in 1992, 1993, and the Dairyland Power Cooperative capital credits assigned for 1988.

Capital credit retirements are to you what dividends are to stockholders at for-profit companies (remember though that in investor-owned utilities, shareholders who purchased stock own the company and get the dividends—not the consumers who utilize the service). Only we don't aim to maximize profits. Our goal is to provide you with electricity at a price as close to cost as possible. That way, more of your money stays in your pocket—up front.



In short, you are receiving a vital resource, electricity, from a business owned and operated by you, your friends, and neighbors. Working together, we provide you with the highest level of service we can while striving to keep your electric bills affordable.

And that's the cooperative difference!

North American Electric Reliability Corp.: Clean Power Plan Raises Reliability Concerns

Over the past several months, the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* has been highlighting the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Power Plan. In the past, I've highlighted my concerns and urged all members to stay abreast of the issues. The following is an article that originally appeared in the *Electric Co-op Today* that I found very interesting. That article is reprinted below:

* * *

The North American Electric Reliability Corp. (NERC) in its first assessment of EPA's Clean Power Plan, outlined several reliability-related issues for the agency, state regulators and regional transmission organizations to consider.

The NERC report "underscores many concerns we have with the EPA's latest regulations for existing power plants," said National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's CEO Jo Ann Emerson. NERC "rightly questions a greater reliance on natural gas generation, unrealistic improvements to existing plants and a lack of infrastructure to support expanded renewable energy transmission," said Emerson.

The assessment said EPA's estimate on coal plant retirements resulting from the proposed rule "may be conservative" if the greenhouse gas emission reductions targets "prove to be unachievable."

"Developing suitable replacement generation resources to maintain adequate reserve margin levels may represent a significant reliability challenge, given the constrained time period for implementation," NERC said.

Increased dependence on natural gas and renewable energy generation carry significant infrastructure requirements. New wind and solar energy to meet the shortfall

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Clark Director Jim Hager Receives Co-op Builder Award

Jim Hager, Harmony Country Cooperative's general manager, was one of four individuals to receive the highest statewide honor for cooperative leaders during Cooperative Network's annual meeting in La Crosse November 18, 2014. The coveted honor is given to individuals who demonstrate the utmost loyalty and service to the cooperative movement at the local, state, regional, or national level.

"Having the largest concentration of cooperatives in the country, Minnesota and Wisconsin have a vast pool of worthy candidates each year for the Cooperative Builder Award," said Bill Oemichen, president and CEO of Cooperative Network, which provides government relations, education, marketing, and technical services to a wide variety of member-cooperatives in Minnesota and Wisconsin. "This year's recipients come from the electric, farm supply, genetics, and credit union industries. They set new records in how young they were when they took the helm at their cooperatives, and also for longevity in their positions. All have demonstrated pas-



Cooperative Network President and CEO Bill Oemichen and Board Chair Sam Skemp present the 2014 Cooperative Builder Award to Clark Electric Director Jim Hager at Cooperative Network's annual meeting in La Crosse.

sionate commitment to building their communities and beyond through the cooperative business model."

Jim Hager, from Colby, became the state's youngest cooperative general manager at the age of 22, when he took the reins at Midland Co-op Services in Cumberland. Forty years later, now head of Harmony Country Cooperatives, he stands as Wisconsin's longest-serving manager. Under Hager's management, Harmony has been one of the most profitable farm supply cooperatives in the state, con-

sistently producing impressive patronage returns and holding an equally remarkable stock retirement plan. Hager is deeply committed to community development and was recognized as Colby Citizen of the Year in 1994. Jim joined the Clark Electric Cooperative Board of Directors in April 2014.

Cooperative Network has honored the distinguished achievements of cooperative leaders from both Minnesota and Wisconsin since the two statewide associations merged in 2009. Prior to this, the former Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives began giving Cooperative Builder Awards in 1976, and the former Minnesota Association of Cooperatives bestowed Cooperative Leadership Awards beginning in 2000.

Cooperative Network serves more than 400 Wisconsin and Minnesota member-cooperatives by providing government relations, education, marketing, and technical services for a wide variety of cooperatives including farm supply, health, dairy marketing, consumer, financial, livestock marketing, telecommunications, electric, housing, insurance, worker-owned cooperatives, and more. ■



Best Wishes for the New Year!
Clark Electric Cooperative and Clark Electric Appliance & Satellite will be closed Thursday, January 1, 2015.

Follow These Tips for Space Heater Safety

As temperatures drop this winter, many will look for supplemental heating sources for their homes. Space heaters can be a good alternative for those who want to warm one area of their home without turning up the thermostat on the central heating system. However, space heaters are also responsible for 32 percent of house fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association. If you are planning to use a space heater in your home this winter, review these tips from Clark Electric Cooperative to keep you, your family, and your property safe.

Materials – What are the components of your space heater made of? Parts like metal grating can be hot to the touch and may burn anyone who gets too close. Make sure you purchase a heater that is cool to the touch and has guards over the coils just in case little fingers get too close.

Placement – While it can be tempting to place a small heater on a shelf so it is not in the way of pets and children, it is safest to leave the heater on a level floor on

a nonflammable surface. Keeping the space heater on the floor can keep it from falling over, preventing fire hazards. Also, remember that space heaters and bathrooms are not a good combination, unless the heater is designed for bathroom use. Moisture can damage the heater.

The most important rule about space heater placement is the three-foot rule. Whether you are using the heater in the bedroom, living room, or kitchen, space heaters should always be kept three feet away from flammable materials and out of the way of children and pets.

Special Features – Does your space heater have an auto shutoff function if tipped over? Auto shutoff can be a lifesaver. If you currently own a space heater without auto shutoff, consider purchasing a heater with this important safety feature.

Cords – You should never use an extension cord when plugging in a space heater as it can cause overheating. The space heater should be plugged directly into a wall outlet, and it should be the only thing plugged in to the wall outlet. Also make sure cords aren't in a high-traffic area so they are not a tripping hazard.

Use – Never leave a heater unattended while in use. If you are leaving your home or going to bed, make sure to unplug the heater. ■



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Contact Greg for all of your alternative heating needs today!



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NERC

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from fossil generation shutdowns under the EPA rule will demand additional transmission to access renewable resources in remote areas, according to NERC.

Increased reliance on natural gas will require pipeline expansion to maintain reliability, particularly during the peak winter heating season, the assessment said. "Pipeline constraints and growing gas and electric interdependency challenges impede the electric industry's ability to obtain needed natural gas services, especially during high-use horizons."

When it comes to energy efficiency requirements, the organization pointed out that "many plant efficiencies have already been realized and economic heat rate improvements have been achieved."

Overall, NERC found that industry stakeholders and regulators together "will need to develop an approach that accommodates the time required for infrastructure deployments, market enhancements, and reliability needs if the environmental objectives of the proposed rule are to be achieved." ■

Scholarship Applications Available



Clark Electric Cooperative is once again offering a scholarship opportunity to graduating students from participating high schools in our service area. One \$750 scholarship will be available for a student from each school or group of schools in our service area.

To be considered for the scholarship, the student's parent or legal guardian must be a member of Clark Electric Cooperative and currently receive electric service from Clark Electric Cooperative.

The Clark Electric Cooperative scholarship program began in 1995, and since its inception we have provided more than \$180,000 in scholarships to area students. An independent scholarship committee judges the applicants based upon merit.

Giving back to the community is one of the cooperative principals; furthering the education of our area youth is another. Clark Electric is proud to help these fine young people meet their educational goals.

Applications are available from your high school counselor, online at www.cecoop.com, and at our office located at 124 N Main St., Greenwood. All applications must be returned to the cooperative office by 5 p.m. Monday, March 9, 2015.

Schools Eligible for Scholarship Consideration

Abbotsford High School, Colby High School, Grant-on High School, Greenwood High School, Loyal High School, Neillsville High School, Owen-Withee High School, Spencer High School, Thorp High School, Stanley High School.

One Scholarship Between These Grouped Schools:

Stratford High School, Columbus High School, Osseo-Fairchild High School, Abbotsford Christian Academy, Marshfield Senior High School, Medford High School, Gilman High School, Pittsville High School, Home School Student

If you have any questions, please contact Tracy Nelson at 715-267-6188 or 1-800-272-6188.

These scholarships are financed through the Federated Youth Foundation Scholarship Program, which is funded from unclaimed capital credits. Federated Youth Foundation (FYF) is a non-profit charitable foundation serving cooperatives across Wisconsin. ■

Welcome Aboard, Jeff!

We would like to welcome Jeff Fellenz to our lineman crew. Jeff started his career with us in May of 2014 as a summer employee and was offered the opportunity to join our crew permanently as an apprentice lineman in November.



Jeff currently lives in Marshfield with his wife, Amy, and their son, Emery. Jeff graduated from the Line Distribution Program in the spring of 2012.

We welcome Jeff and wish him the best of luck in his career with Clark Electric Cooperative. ■

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