



More on EPA Rules

Tim Stewart, CEO/Manager

Last month I talked about the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new regulations of carbon dioxide emissions on existing power plant facilities, which will have an impact on Wisconsin's coal-dominant electric generation portfolio and electric rates.

As you may recall, the proposed rule, which totals in excess of 1,600 pages, mandates a 30 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from electric generating plants by 2030 (using a nationwide average). In addition, the EPA's "Clean Power Plan" calls for existing Wisconsin power plants to reduce CO₂ emissions 34.2 percent below 2005 levels.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) has raised a number of questions and concerns regarding the proposed rule. NRECA is concerned that the rule will increase electricity prices and force power plant shutdowns. The proposed regulations could dramatically increase prices and unfairly affect regions of the United States most dependent on coal for electricity (i.e. the Midwest). For example, did you know that Wisconsin relies on coal generation for approximately 60 to 70 percent of our electricity needs? In addition, our power supplier, Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), is also heavily dependent on coal for its baseload generation, with more than 88 percent being generated from fossil fuel. We are concerned that the cost to operate coal-fired generation, which is one of our nation's most reliable and cost-effective sources of power, could be significantly increased, a cost that ultimately will be passed on to utility customers.

Besides the actual rule itself, a lot has been written about the rule's legality, feasibility, and complexity.

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Board of Directors Considers Community Solar Project

The Clark Electric Cooperative Board of Directors is in the process of considering construction of a solar generation project. The project, based upon member interest, would be a 100–150 kilowatt (kW) community solar garden to be located next to the cooperative's new headquarters facility. By taking advantage of economies of scale, we hope to offer a highly competitive solar product to our membership.

While a lot of the details need to be worked out, the general concept is designed for those members interested in an affordable option to purchase renewable solar energy. Members will have the opportunity to purchase a subscription unit and receive credit equal to their share of the array's output on their electric bill.

By utilizing a solar garden approach, issues such as inadequate space for solar panels near your home, too many trees that would block the sun at your residence, cost of a small PV (solar) array, installing panels on your rooftop, insurance, and interconnection of the PV system to the grid all go away. In addition, all operation and maintenance issues would be handled by Clark Electric



Cooperative. Any residential/seasonal member, regardless of whether you own or rent your home and where you live, who pays a monthly electric bill to Clark Electric Cooperative could be a potential candidate for participating in the community solar project.

We don't currently have all the details finalized but hope to in the upcoming months. Right now we are attempting to gauge member interest in such a project. A participation unit would probably sell for between \$500 and \$1,000. If you would like to get more information on Clark Electric Cooperative's community solar project, please give us a call, or complete the information below and return it to our office (with your electric bill is fine). We will contact you when we have finalized the details and are ready to take commitments for participation in the project. ■

Member's Name _____
Address _____
Phone Number _____

Youth Leadership Congress Teaches Cooperation, Leadership

Clark Electric Cooperative sponsored five students to this year's 51st Youth Leadership Congress (YLC), held at UW–River Falls July 16–18. Aaron Lindner, Greenwood; Derek Anding, Granton; Austin Naedler, Granton; Stewart Braun, Abbotsford; and Casey Krueger, Colby joined nearly 150 students from Wisconsin to learn more about the cooperative business model and improve their leadership skills. The YLC is designed to provide today's youth with stronger leadership and team-building skills, as well as a broader understanding of cooperatives.

Through a mix of workshop sessions, hands-on activities, and team-building experiences, participants were exposed to a variety of real-life issues and given the opportunity to identify and explore their leadership potential. Sessions related to the importance of setting goals and how determination, hard work, and persistence pay off, and how to step up as a leader whether you are in a leadership position or not. The students also established relationships with other students from across Wisconsin throughout the three-day event.

These are a few of the comments received from the students who represented CEC:

"The conference was a great experience and I learned many new things. I learned how cooperatives work and about safety around electricity. I also learned different ways to be a leader."

"The conference was a very fun and educational experience."

"I learned a lot about cooperatives and to how get



Representing Clark Electric at the 2014 Youth Leadership Congress were, left to right, Casey Krueger, Stewart Braun, Austin Naedler, Derek Anding, and Aaron Lindner.

out of my comfort zone and participate in group activities. This will help me to achieve my goals in the future."

"The animated illusionist was amazing and really funny."

Wisconsin's electric cooperatives and UW–River Falls have co-sponsored this event for 51 years to demonstrate to high school students the basics of cooperatives and how they can apply the ideals and philosophies of cooperation directly to their lives. Students who attend the congress improve their ability to interact with their peers and demonstrate their desire to be leaders.

The delegates left the conference with valuable leadership skills they can use both in school and in their community activities. Each spring Clark Electric Cooperative contacts schools in our service area asking for students to represent the cooperative at the YLC. This is a great opportunity for students entering 10th or 11th grade. ■



Left: All 146 YLC delegates pose for a group photo. Above: Students try to untangle themselves in one of the many team-building exercises.

Gary French Retires

Gary French began his 35-year career at Clark Electric Cooperative in July 1979. Hired as a lineman/meterman, Gary soon found that metering was the career he wanted to pursue.

“Throughout my 35 years there have been many changes in the electric industry, especially in the technology of the meters that made the job challenging at times to say the least,” said Gary.

When asked what some of the biggest changes have been while working for Clark Electric, Gary said, “The single biggest change was going from member self-reading of mechanical and digital meters to a fully automated meter reading system. In 2005 we began installing our first automated meters. This allowed the member to call and find out how much electricity they used on specific dates or times of day. For instance, you could check



your usage when the kids would come home from college for Christmas break versus the rest of the month. The system has evolved to where now you can sign up and go online to view your usage anytime with your computer or mobile device. It really gives the members a lot of information to help manage their account.”

He noted that considering all of the changes in the past 35 years, it should be interesting to see what’s coming next.

Gary’s retirement plans include having time to enjoy his hobbies, which are fishing, painting jigs, fly tying, and learning how to use the scroll saw. He is also hoping to rent a houseboat on the boundary waters of Canada and Minnesota. He hopes to get involved with a few groups or associations also. But first he will tackle the first “Retirement Honey Do List” his wife, Jenny, gave him.

Good luck to you, Gary, from all of us here at Clark Electric Cooperative. Don’t forget to stop in to say hello every once in a while. ■

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EPA Rule

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However, what I am concerned about is the impact on people and specifically our members. Given the requirement targets mentioned above, I have questions such as how much will electric bills increase? What about people who have a hard time paying their bill today? Will manufacturers relocate? How many jobs may be lost/gained? Which power plants will be forced to shut down? How will the reliability of the grid be affected? If plants are shut down, will we be able to withstand another polar vortex? Shouldn't our energy policy incorporate an "all of the above" approach to reach our energy needs instead of an "all but one" approach? How can utilities manage carbon dioxide when no viable technology exists?

These are difficult questions. But they're important questions. At Clark Electric Cooperative we strive to keep your electricity affordable and reliable. That's why we need to remind bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., that the rules they write have an impact on all of us. Getting answers to difficult questions is important. The EPA proposal has a 120-day comment period running from June through October of this year. Regardless of your viewpoint on climate change, I encourage all Clark Electric Cooperative members to stay well informed on this topic. Your voice counts. Please go to www.action.coop to learn more about the issues and to tell EPA your concerns about how important affordable and reliable electricity is. ■



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Fall is here, and that means colder months will be here before we know it. Is your home prepared for the drafts that may enter? Tight-fitting insulating drapes or shades are a perfect way to keep the heat in and the cold out.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



When COMFORT Matters

Looking for an efficient, cost effective and environmentally friendly heating and cooling system? A geothermal heat pump is the greenest system available. Geothermal systems don't emit carbon dioxide,

carbon monoxide or other greenhouse gasses that can be harmful to the environment or, more importantly, your family. Save money and rest easy knowing your family will be comfortable and safe.



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**Our office will be closed Monday,
September 1, for Labor Day.**



Clark Electric Cooperative

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