



**Clark Electric  
Cooperative**

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# ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

## Pandemic-caused safety accommodations change up typical yearly gathering

Tim Stewart, CEO/Manager

Ever since the creation of Clark Electric Cooperative, back in 1937, the cooperative has held an annual meeting. The annual meeting was a time for members to come together to learn more about their organization, conduct business, enjoy a nice meal, and socialize with their friends and neighbors. For many, it is an event that members look forward to year after year.

As you know, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the original annual meeting was postponed from April 14, 2020, to the rescheduled date of July 29, 2020. There were some changes to this year's event. The meeting was held at the cooperative's headquarters, not the Loyal Legion Hall. This was done to have better air flow with the garage doors open to help circulate the air. Masks or face shields were worn and hand sanitizer was provided to attendees. The business meeting was designed to be short.

The bylaws provide that the number of members to constitute a quorum at a meeting of members shall be fifty (50). Unfortunately, we did not have 50 members register so the cooperative could not conduct business. We will incorporate the business needs with next year's annual meeting which hopefully returns to more routine activities. However, those in attendance heard Board President Herman Seebandt's and CEO/GM Tim Stewart's address to the members. The following is a recap of the day's events

### CEO/General Managers' Report

The following is an excerpt from CEO/GM Stewart's report to the members.

#### 2019 Financial Review

Clark Electric Cooperative continues to report solid financial performance. Total kWh sales decreased approximately ½ percent while purchased power increased 2.79% and the total cost of

providing electric service increased 3.48% over the previous year. However, as a result of cost containment programs, the cooperative helped offset ever-increasing costs

which resulted in a positive operation margin in excess of \$1.03 million. Our debt ratio decreased for the fourth consecutive year while equity increased to 69.37% of total assets. The cooperative has met and exceeded our financial metrics required by our lenders. In addition, the cooperative

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Clark Electric Cooperative's reliability measurers suffered somewhat with the July 19, 2019 through July 21, 2019 storms. You may recall the storms as we had over 8,000 services affected during that time frame. This was a FEMA level event that incurred over \$150,000 in damages.

The cooperative invested in excess of \$3.48 million in distribution plant during 2019. This represents new construction and replacement of electric lines and infrastructure, new service extensions and member service upgrades. We will continue to strive to keep the price of electricity as low as possible while meeting our capital needs.

#### Capital Credit Retirements

One of the most tangible evidence of true ownership in your electric utility is through the retirement of capital credits. I am extremely pleased to report that Clark Electric Cooperative retired in excess of \$1.0 million in 2019, bringing the total dividends retired as of December 31, 2019 to date to over \$25.7 million. In fact, the cooperative has retired over \$7.5 million since 2013. We are very pleased with our ability to rotate patronage at this level.

#### Resource Diversification

Dairyland Power Cooperative has been diversifying our generation resource portfolio, reducing our carbon footprint, and creating an economic and sustainable resource mix. In January, the decision was made to retire the 345 MW coal-fired Genoa Station #3 when the fuel supply is depleted. The station has operated extremely well for over 50 years. The estimated retirement date is in 2021.

Dairyland announced two major renewable energy investments in 2019, a power purchase agreement for 149 MW of solar in Wisconsin and a 52 MW of wind in South Dakota.

The proposed Nemadji Trail Energy Center is a 625 MW natural gas facility will help Dairyland diversify its resources and reduce carbon intensity and will ensure reliability while supporting additional renewable energy sources. The facility is scheduled to be operational in 2025.

#### Metering Upgrade

As you may recall from last year's annual report, Clark Electric Cooperative began replacing our current automated meter reading system with a new one that requires the

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# MAKE TIME FOR SAFETY

## AVOID HAZARDS WITH OVERHEAD POWER LINES

Fall harvest is the most likely time of year for farm-related accidents and fatalities. The number one factor in electrocution on the farm is an auger that hits a power line when being moved. Be aware of your surroundings and look up often.

### Safe Electricity offers the following harvest safety tips:

1. Check the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
2. Be aware of the location of power poles and lines, including field entry and exit points, and plan a safe equipment route.
3. Always keep a minimum 10-foot safety radius around an electric line.
4. Use a spotter when moving tall loads near electrical lines.
5. Lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving equipment.
6. Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
7. Know what to do if your equipment does make contact with a power line. It's almost always safest staying in the cab. Call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait until the electric utility says it's safe to get down.

Learn more at:

The logo for Safe Electricity.org features the word "Safe" in a bold, sans-serif font above the word "Electricity.org". A stylized graphic of a power plug is integrated into the letter "E" of "Electricity".



# PROVIDING RELIABLE ELECTRICITY

Beyond the flip  
of a switch

Clark Electric Cooperative has numerous maintenance programs that help provide safe, reliable electricity. One of the most important programs the cooperative performs is our vegetation management program. This program is twofold. First, trees are cut and trimmed from within the right-of-way. Once the trimming and clearing process has been completed, a herbicide application is applied to help reduce re-growth within the right-of-way.

In today's high-tech electronic world that we live in, it's more important than ever to provide safe, reliable electricity to our members. Trees continue to be among the leading causes of blinking lights and power outages. The cooperative has an extensive tree-clearing program that is performed on a five-year rotation by professional tree-clearing contractors. The contractors are instructed to cut, clear, and mow the right-of-way to provide 15 feet of clearance to the primary power lines. Clear-



ance of 3 to 6 feet is required on overhead secondary service wires, depending on the type of service you have.

The cooperative also has a herbicide program that is completed on a two-year rotation. This program is also completed by professional contractors who are all state certified and licensed through the

Department of Agriculture. The use of herbicides to control small trees and brush is far more economical compared to the use of heavy machinery such as bucket trucks, chippers, and mowers.

It's important to remember that a single tree can cause blinking lights and power outages that can affect hundreds of customers for miles around. A tree-clearing program in combination with herbicide treatments is the most economical way to maintain a clear right-of-way corridor.

These very important maintenance programs are just two of many that are needed to help keep the lights on when you, the member, flips the switch.



## TRIMMED TREES = BETTER SERVICE

When you see us trimming trees near power lines, know that we are doing so because:

- Tree and foliage overgrowth can interfere with power distribution.
- Power lines can give off a spark or arc that may land on a nearby branch and ignite.
- The lights in your house may flicker when tree branches brush power lines during high winds.
- Stormy weather can cause nearby limbs to breakoff and land on power lines.
- Unobstructed power lines make it easier and safer for line workers to maintain equipment and restore power.



## Annual Meeting Update (Continued from page 15)

installation of different meters. We are currently over 90% deployed and expect the project to wind up within the next 60 days or so.

## Other Annual Meeting Highlights

### Clark Electric Cooperative/Greenwood FFA Program

President Herman Seebandt discussed our newest youth program which partners with the Greenwood FFA and FFA Alumni. This program allows the Greenwood FFA students real hands-on experience in managing crop land that is located adjacent to the cooperative's headquarters. The students learn about cooperatives, the Seven Cooperative Principles, and the not-for-profit business model that makes cooperatives unique. These outreach programs continue to be well received and are tangible examples of our commitment to our area young people.

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## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Clothes dryers make up a large portion of your appliance energy consumption. Clean the lint filter after each cycle and scrub the filter with a toothbrush once a month to remove film and increase air circulation.

—Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



HAPPY  
**Labor Day**

Our office will be closed Monday, September 7.  
Have a safe and happy Labor Day weekend!

## GEOTHERMAL

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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