



Tim Stewart,  
CEO/Manager

## ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES CREATE CHARGE EV, LLC

Clark Electric Cooperative, with a group of 28 other electric co-ops, has joined together to create a regional electric vehicle (EV) charging network across Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota named CHARGE EV, LLC. The network includes over 30 Level 2 and Level 3 charging stations and that number is growing.

“Electric co-ops have brand awareness and a strong relationship with their members and communities. We want to ensure when EV drivers leave their co-op service area they know other EV charging stations are available throughout the upper Midwest powered by electric co-ops. One of the main goals of the group is to plan for future growth in EVs, and to alleviate ‘range anxiety,’ which is the concern some people have about traveling in an EV without a place to charge their vehicle,” said Tim Stewart, CEO of Clark Electric Cooperative.

The objective is to provide EV owners peace of mind driving from Iowa to northern Wisconsin, or from Minnesota to Illinois, knowing there are co-op powered chargers along their route. That will give people confidence to consider an EV and encourage growth in the EV market.

The CHARGE EV infrastructure is just the start as the group plans for additional investments in the EV market including member education on installing home chargers and encouraging members to test drive EVs.



“We are proving this can be done in the upper Midwest where EV adoption has been slow, but we believe the real value will be in having other utilities join under the CHARGE EV brand,” Stewart said. “We hope in the near future there is a national co-op EV brand and charging network.”

Charger locations and other information can be found at [www.charge.coop](http://www.charge.coop).

### CHARGE EV, LLC Invests in ZEF Energy

ZEF Energy Inc. (Edina, Minn.) has added CHARGE EV, LLC, a collaboration of 29 community-owned electric cooperatives, to its list of investors.

CHARGE EV’s founding co-ops are located throughout the Midwest in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Together they are working to build a national electric vehicle (EV) charging brand powered by co-ops and investing in EV-focused companies.

“CHARGE EV’s investment is not only important for growing our business, but it also demonstrates their belief in the ZEF Energy’s ZEFNET utility platform and ZEFNET-enabled Level 2 and Level 3 chargers,” said Matthew Blackler, CEO of ZEF Energy. “The EV market is taking off and having our chargers easily accessible will create a better EV driver experience. We believe connecting drivers with their serving utility is essential to achieving the beneficial load growth dream” said Blackler.

## EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED FOR YEARS OF SERVICE

Clark Electric Cooperative recently recognized three employees for their years of service. Pictured left to right: Michelle Walde, inside sale manager-Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite, Inc., 25 years; Pat Susa, warehouseman, 15 years; and Kole Hinker, lineman, 5 years.

Congratulations for reaching these milestones, and thank you for your dedicated service.





# CLEARING THE WAY FOR SAFETY

## Clark Electric Cooperative's Vegetation Management Program

**A**s I write this article, I am struck by the beauty of the hoarfrost on all the trees. It looks like we are living in a snow globe. In case you didn't know, hoarfrost is a grayish white crystalline deposit of frozen water vapor formed in clear still weather on vegetation, fences, and yes, power lines. Hoarfrost has certainly caused issues related to delivery of electricity. Really, since the end of December, you may have experienced blinks or perhaps even an outage. A lot of this is because of the excess weight caused by the frost on the lines and the trees. In a lot of ways, it builds like ice. The following article talks about our vegetation management and why it is so important in helping avoid outages and blinks.

Have you ever noticed bucket trucks or machines clearing brush by the power lines? They do the important job of helping keep the lights on long before a storm rolls in. In the battle against power outages, Vegetation Management is the Clark Electric Cooperative's most effective weapon.

We often receive questions about how the co-op handles the removal of brush. Below we've provided answers to the most asked questions, in an effort to explain CEC's Vegetation Management program.

**What is a Vegetation Management Program?** Our Vegetation Management Program is the process we use to clear trees/vegetation using chainsaws, bucket trucks, tree climbers, brush chippers, and mowers to keep our rights-of-way clear.

**What are rights-of-way?** A right-of-way is a corridor or pathway of land that CEC's electric lines follow. These rights-of-way provide CEC an operational safety zone between the wires and trees, buildings, or other objects. When

they are kept clear they also provide safe access for line crews to maintain, repair, or improve the lines and poles. CEC uses a Vegetation Management Program to keep the rights-of-way clear of undesirable vegetation.

**Why do we clear rights-of-way?** We clear rights-of-way to maintain reliability and shorten the length of outages, and to provide for public safety and the safety of the workers who need to work on the utility lines.

**Who does the clearing?** Tree contractors that work on CEC's electric distribution system are qualified and insured to do this work.

**What is the Hazard Tree Program?** CEC has a Hazard Tree Program that identifies trees outside of the 30-foot right-of-way (15 feet on either side of the line) and removes them if they are deemed a threat to fall on power lines.

**What is an Integrated Vegetation Management Program?** Two years after cutting and trimming, a contractor will survey for possible selective herbicide application. Not all areas that are cut are appropriate for herbicide application. CEC uses herbicides to control the brush that sprouts from hardwood species that were cut. Once a single stem has been cut, it may sprout into as many as 15 new stems that grow rapidly. The selective herbicide application targets these species.





# DIRECTOR ODEEN EARNS BOARD LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATION

For electric cooperatives to thrive in this time of change and uncertainty, it is vital that directors have a solid understanding of the electric cooperative business model. They must have a diverse set of knowledge and skills, up-to-date knowledge of industry changes, and a commitment to learn throughout their service on the board of directors.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Director Certificate Programs are specifically designed to help electric cooperative directors understand the complexity of a very challenging industry. The certification requirements consist of three parts:

**Credentialed Cooperative Director Certification (CCD)** – The CCD is a set of five courses that focus on basic governance knowledge and the essential skills required of cooperative directors. The CCD prepares directors to fulfill their

fiduciary duty as elected officials serving on behalf of their membership.

**Board Leadership Certification (BLC)** – After completing the CCD, and as directors continue their board service, they need to stay current on industry issues and evolving expectations for governance. The BLC courses have been grouped into specialty areas such as power supply, finance, risk management, technology, and governance.

**Director Gold Certification (DGC)** – This credential recognizes directors who have earned their CCD and BLC credentials and are committed to continuing their education throughout their service on the board. To earn the DGC, a director must hold the CCD and BLC and earn additional credits from the Board Leadership Certificate series of courses.

Congratulations to Director Thomas Odeen for earning the BLC Certification.



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MY CO-OP





# 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 \$1,000 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 \$239,000 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](http://www.cecoop.com), and at our office located at 1209 W Dall-Berg Rd., Greenwood.



**All applications must be returned to the cooperative office by 5 p.m. Monday, March 8, 2021**

## Schools Eligible for Scholarship Consideration

Abbotsford High School, Colby High School, Granton 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:

### Group 1

Stratford High School, Columbus High School, Osseo-Fairchild High School, Abbotsford Christian Academy

### Group 2

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, administrative assistant, at 715-267-7958 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.**

## NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

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Clark Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Tim Stewart, CEO/Manager

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