

Clark Electric Linemen Win Potthast Award

Receiving the 2013 Potthast Award during the March meeting of the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association were Clark Electric Cooperative linemen Scott Bailen (left in photo) and Josh Burns.

On the job near Pittsville January 14, they were alerted to fire at a nearby home. They cut off power and gas supplies to the dwelling, contacted the fire department, awakened a teenage girl who had been asleep inside (groggy from cold medication), and stayed at



the scene until help arrived. In a letter to Clark CEO Tim Stewart, the girl's parents said Bailen and Burns "set

an example of a commendable employee, praiseworthy neighbor, and persons of high character," adding that in keeping with the co-op's vision that "members are the reason for our existence," the crew's actions were "evidence that you are achieving what you believe."

The award is given annually to honor Wisconsin electric cooperative personnel applying the values of Herman Potthast, who pioneered utility worker job training and safety education in Wisconsin and nationwide over three decades beginning in the 1940s. ■



Leifer Award

Administrative Assistant Tracy Nelson accepts the N. F. Leifer Memorial Journalism Award during recent WECA Education and Lobby Day activities in Madison from Perry Baird, editor of the Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News. Her efforts during 2012 made Clark Electric Cooperative a first-time winner of the Leifer Award, given annually since 1966 to recognize overall excellence in the local co-op pages of the magazine. The award is named for "Lefty" Leifer, the former Vernon Electric manager who led the 1940 creation of Wisconsin's REA News.

Youth Leadership Congress Set for July

Electric cooperatives from across Wisconsin will sponsor local high school students at the 50th Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) July 10–12 on the campus of UW–River Falls. The YLC is sponsored by UW–River Falls and Wisconsin electric cooperatives and is designed to develop the next generation of community leaders.



The event will feature leadership seminars led by nationally acclaimed speakers, hands-on activities, team-building exercises, cooperative education, and fun events, all designed to develop and enhance your leadership potential. Clark Electric Cooperative has sponsored students to this event since its inception. We believe in developing the potential of tomorrow's leaders. The YLC is a fun and educational event, designed by students

who were elected by their peers at the previous year's conference to serve on the WECA Youth Board.

There is no cost to the student for attending the event. Registration and travel expenses will be covered by the cooperative. If you going to be a sophomore or a junior in high school this coming fall and would like to be a sponsored representative for Clark Electric Cooperative, contact your FFA or FBLA advisor. ■

CONTACTING DIGGERS HOTLINE:

Helpful Hints for Homeowners

Spring in Wisconsin is a great time of year as everything thaws out and people spend more time outside. Typically, this time of year also means the start of the do-it-yourself project season for homeowners; some common projects include building a deck, installing a swing set, or planting a garden or trees, just to name a few.

As a homeowner you may be aware of Diggers Hotline for large excavation projects that dig deep, but do you realize that you need to contact Diggers Hotline for projects that involve any digging in your yard? State law requires everyone to contact Diggers Hotline anytime the soil is disturbed. It is also important to be aware of the fact that you may be held liable for any damages to buried utility lines if Diggers Hotline is not contacted before digging.

When it comes time to start that yard project you can call Diggers Hotline 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, either by calling 800-242-8511 or by dialing 811, which will directly connect you to the call center. You can also submit your request through Email-A-Locate on www.DiggersHotline.com.

When you contact Diggers Hotline you will always be asked to provide certain information, so please be prepared with the following:

- Specify that you are a homeowner and provide your name, phone number, and address

- The city, township, or village that you are planning to work in
- The street address of the work site
- The nearest intersecting road and the distance and direction from that road (this helps the Diggers Hotline representative find the exact location on their maps)
- Kind of work that you plan to do (i.e. planting a tree or installing a fence)
- The date you plan to start work
- The area you would like to have marked for underground facilities on the property

Once you have put in your request you will be given a ticket number, which is your legal proof that you contacted Diggers Hotline, and you must wait three working days before digging to allow proper time for all of the underground utility lines to be marked. After the three-day waiting period you are then clear to dig; it is best to stay a minimum of 18 inches away from the lines on either side, but the safest bet is to avoid any areas with buried facilities completely. If you must dig within 18 inches, dig with care using hand tools. ■

Article courtesy of Diggers Hotline



Tree Planting Season is Here!

With the winter season in the rear-view mirror, the smell of spring in the air, and thoughts of green grass comes the planting season. As farmers prepare to take to the fields and gardeners, landscapers, and arborists sharpen their shovels, we are reminded that spring is a good time to plant trees.

Whether you are planting a single tree in the front yard or several thousand trees to start a plantation, it's important to consider the species

of trees and the location in which you plan to plant them. This is especially important if you are planting trees near overhead power lines, says Mike Ruff, Clark Electric director of operations.

Many people plant trees too close to power lines for various reasons. They think that the trees will never get tall enough to grow into the power lines, or they simply forget to look up before they plant them.

The fact is that most trees will

grow tall enough to touch power lines faster than you think. So take time to research your tree selection or consult with your local tree nursery for advice on which trees are appropriate for your landscaping area.

As the trees grow, they can come into contact with the power lines and create power outages or momentary interruptions. However, the greatest concern is the safety risk that can be created when children climb trees near power lines. Accidental contact with electrical wires while playing in or climbing a tree can be fatal.

As we move through the spring season and into summer, please take some time to consider a few things, especially if you plan to plant trees around power lines.

- Clark Electric Cooperative requires 15 feet of clearance on both sides of the line for single-phase lines and 20 feet on both sides of the line for three-phase line right-of-way.
- Be sure to plant your trees far enough away from power lines so that when the trees are fully grown, there will still be 20 feet of clearance to the power line without the need for trimming.
- Remember, if you choose to plant trees in the right-of-way or too close to the right-of-way, your trees may need to be trimmed or cut some day, and that day may come sooner than you think.

If you have trees that appear to be growing into power lines, contact Clark Electric Cooperative at 1-800-272-6188. Never try to prune them yourself. We have skilled professionals trained to safely prune and trim trees for electric line clearance. ■

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Greg will be happy to meet with you to analysis your home and comfort needs. Based on that information he will be able to recommend a system that works best for your home.

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Give Your Air Conditioner a Spring Tune-Up

Spring is a good time for maintaining your air conditioner. Chances are you welcomed the cooler temperatures when they arrived last fall and turned off your air-conditioning unit without a lot of thought. Now, before you turn it back on again for the season, you'll want to make sure your unit is clean and ready to work properly and efficiently once the hot weather returns. If you keep the coils of your air conditioner clean, it will improve your comfort and reduce your electricity costs this summer.

Start by inspecting the outdoor condensing unit. The large outdoor coil—it looks like a car radiator—is where heat is dissipated from your home. The fan in the condensing unit has to move a lot of air through the coil, so make sure there are no airflow restrictions around the unit. Cut nearby grass, shrubs, and branches so they are at least 3 feet away at the side and 5 feet away overhead.

Most condenser coils are loaded with pollen and

dust even when you can't see it. The longest a condenser should go without cleaning is two or three years, depending on how much it operates during the summer. If you use your air conditioner for four months or more, annual cleaning is an excellent idea. Turn off the power to the unit and remove any visible grass and lint from the fins and/or louvers with an old hairbrush or whisk broom. Then put on a pair of rubber gloves and spray biodegradable outdoor coil cleaner into the coil. Wait five or 10 minutes and flush the coil with a gentle wash spray.

Your indoor coil might also need cleaning, even though you can't easily see it. If your air conditioner's filter or blower is dirty, then your indoor coil is probably dirty, too. This is usually a job for professionals, unless you have easy access, as with a central heat pump. To help keep your indoor coil clean, make sure your filter fits well, is easy to change, and that you change it regularly. Have your air conditioning contractor make improvements to the filter, if needed, so it is easy to get to. Change the filter often to help keep your indoor air conditioner coil clean and reduce energy consumption.—Source: John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management, www.residential-energy.com ■

Central Air Incentive Program

To help reduce the demand for electric power during the summer season, Clark Electric Cooperative offers an Air Conditioner Load Management Program Incentive.

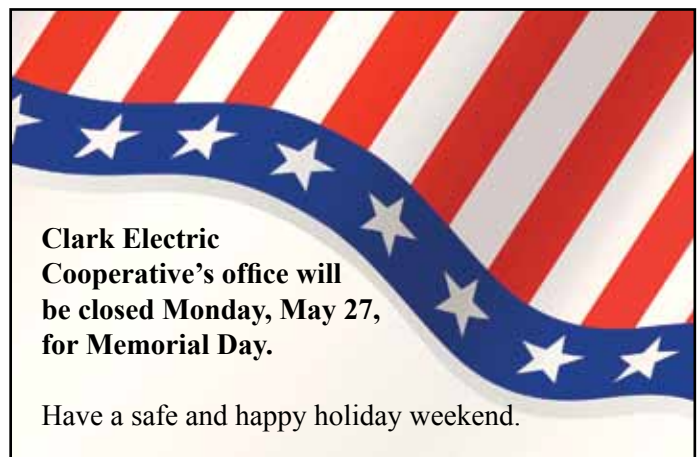
Each central air conditioner (AC) unit being managed during a period of high demand is shut off for approximately 20 minutes and then allowed to resume cooling for 20 minutes. This means they are still cooling about half of the time. Many members say they don't even realize the cooperative is managing the unit because they don't notice any temperature change inside the home.

If you have a central air conditioning unit and it is not part of the load management program, consider trying it for a summer. You will receive a one time \$25.00 bill credit after the load management switch is installed on the AC, and then you will see an \$8 credit on your electric bill for the consumption months of June, July and August.

Call Clark Electric Cooperative at 1-800-272-6188 for questions, or to sign up. Certain restrictions may apply.



\$8/month credit on your electric bill during the summer cooling season



Clark Electric Cooperative's office will be closed Monday, May 27, for Memorial Day.

Have a safe and happy holiday weekend.



Clark Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



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