



By Tim Stewart,
CEO/Manager

SAVE A LIFE:

Avoid Distractions While Driving



Clark Electric
Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

Late August to early September is typically back to school. As a new school year begins with young drivers and school buses back on the road, I thought it would be a good time to remind folks, including myself, of the dangers of distracted driving.

While driving, we typically hear that “ding” on our phone, alerting us to a text or call coming through, and we sometimes feel the urgent need to check it. We know we shouldn’t, but we reason that we’re going to make an exception—just this once.

So, why do we indulge in behavior we know to be wrong, dangerous, and in many states, illegal? Call it hubris. According to AAA research, most people feel they are better-than-average drivers. After all, we have busy lives and are accustomed to multitasking. But mounds of research and thousands of deaths every year prove otherwise.

The reality is that using a phone while driving creates enormous potential for injuries and fatalities. Distractions take a motorist’s attention off driving, which can make a driver miss critical events, objects and cues, potentially leading to a crash.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one of every 10 fatal crashes in the United States involves distracted driving, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths annually. I find this statistic heartbreaking considering so many of these accidents could easily be avoided if we’d simply put down our phones while driving.

Distracted driving is considered any activity that diverts our attention, including texting or talking on the phone, and adjusting the navigation or entertainment system. Texting is by far

one of the most dangerous distractions. Sending or reading one text takes your eyes off the road for an average of five seconds. At 55 mph, that’s like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

In addition to refraining from texting while driving, we can help keep the roads safe by moving over for first responders and other emergency vehicles. Additionally, if you see utility crews conducting work near the roadside, please move over and give them extra space to perform their work safely.

Finally, pay extra attention to the bright yellow school buses as they pick

up and deliver kids to school. Be aware that they make numerous stops at houses and rail crossings. Don’t ever pass a school bus with the stop sign displayed. Let’s all slow down and be aware.

At Clark Electric Cooperative,

safety is foremost in everything we do—for our employees and the members of the communities we serve. We routinely remind our crews of the dangers of distracted driving, and we hope you’ll have similar conversations with your teens, who may be new to the roadways and are especially

susceptible to the lure of technology. Let’s work together to keep everyone safe. Remember: That text can wait, and waiting just might save a life.

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LOCAL STUDENTS REPRESENT CLARK ELECTRIC AT YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Clark Electric Cooperative sponsored four students to this year's 62nd Youth Leadership Conference (YLC), held at UW-Stout July 15 – 17. They joined more than 80 students from cooperatives throughout the state to learn about the cooperative business model and improve their leadership skills. Benjamin Heath, Jacob Schmidt, and Jillian Rueth of Loyal as well as Shaylen Pierce of Neillsville represented Clark Electric at this year's conference.

During the three-day event, students learned team building skills and stronger leadership skills as well as the 7 Cooperative Principles. Through challenging team-building activities, participants were exposed to real-life issues and given the opportunity to explore their leadership potential. They learned about the importance of setting goals and how determination, hard work, and persistence pay off, and how to step up to be a leader whether you are in a leadership position or not.

Guest speakers this year included Hunter Gillet who spoke about Overcoming Trauma: Life After a Plane Accident. Safety and Loss Control Manager Ben Bella gave a presentation

on Safe Driving/License to Live and Joe Mesc, Director of Government Relations from WECA gave a speech on The Power of Advocacy. Motivational Speaker Craig Hillier had an interactive breakthrough session with students that focused on the five "P's" of leadership: people, passion, perspective, process, and principle.

While students took in building blocks for enhancing their leadership skills, they also participated in a formal etiquette dinner to prepare them for proper manners in a formal or interview dinner setting. Teens also got to kick back a little with a hypnotist that provided a multitude of funny photos and stories to tell.

Students also had the opportunity to run for a seat on the WECA Youth Board. On the final morning everyone gathered for the closing session where candidates running for the Youth Leadership Board delivered their speeches and a vote was taken to see who the six Youth Leadership

Board members would be for 2025-2026. Jacob Schmidt from Clark Electric Cooperative was elected and will help in the planning of the 2026 YLC.

The delegates left the conference with valuable leadership skills they can use both in school and in their community.

Each spring Clark Electric Cooperative contacts schools in our service area, asking for students to represent the cooperative at the Youth Leadership Conference. This is a fantastic opportunity for students entering 10th or 11th grade.



Local students who represented Clark Electric, left to right: Benjamin Heath, Jillian Rueth, Shalen Pierce and Jacob Schmidt.



MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY & Kick-off to Cooperative Month

**A FREE Pancake, Egg
& Sausage Breakfast**
Activities for kids of all ages

Saturday, September 27

7 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the


Clark Electric headquarters,
just west of Greenwood on CTH G

Please Follow Detour for CTH G West as bridge is out



Clark Electric Cooperative

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

River Country Co-op

331 Industrial Ave.
Owen, WI 54460
715-229-4613

"Take Back" Initiative **7-11 a.m.**

Bring your unused, controlled, non-controlled, and over-the-counter medications in their original containers to be dropped off—free, with no questions asked.

Questions? Clark County Sheriff's Department at 715-743-3157.



Food Drive for Local Food Pantries

Help us demonstrate the 7th Cooperative Principle, Commitment to Community, by bringing a non-perishable, non-expired food item to be donated to your local food pantry.



Pumpkins • Crafts for Kids **Giant Inflatables**



Greenwood Fire & EMS

will provide free blood pressure testing.



Marshfield Medical Center & Clark County Health Department

will be here to provide community health information — free of charge.

SAFETY FIRST ALWAYS

Safety First Always is the motto linemen live by. Linemen work in a very hazardous profession. They work around large equipment, high in the air, on and around high-voltage equipment, in all kinds of weather conditions, both day and night. In fact, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, utility linework is among the nation's top 10 most hazardous professions.

Clark Electric Cooperative participates in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Rural Electric Achievement Program (RESAP) to help stress the importance of electrical safety. One of the components of the program is monthly safety meetings. These safety meetings consist of classroom training as well as hands-on training and equipment testing. At least one meeting a year is dedicated to pole-top rescue procedures.

The meetings consist of inspections of the trucks, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), proper traffic control, proper operating procedures, and an overall inspection of tools and equipment to ensure they are in good working condition. Safety First Always is a good motto to live by for all of us.

Pictured at right is one of our line-men performing pole-top rescue using a weighted, life-sized training prop.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of "shoulder months," which refer to the transitional periods between peak heating and cooling seasons. During the fall, these milder weeks typically occur between September and November. Shoulder months offer a great opportunity to reduce home energy consumption as the need for extensive heating or cooling is reduced. Look for simple ways to boost indoor comfort without running your heating and cooling system. Use ceiling fans and open windows on breezy days to ventilate your home. On cooler days, add a layer of clothing and avoid running the heat.



HAPPY
LABOR DAY

**Clark Electric Cooperative will be closed
Monday, September 1**

Tim Stewart, CEO/Manager

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Office Hours:

7:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m.—May through October

7:30 a.m. —4:00 p.m.—November through April