

Vernon Electric Cooperative

"Information for our member-owners."

## 81st Annual Meeting Highlights

*Pancakes, scholarships, and healthy margins*



The Westby High School robotics team put on a demonstration.



Vernon Electric Cooperative's 81st Annual Meeting of its members was held at the Westby headquarters in March. CEO & General Manager Joe McDonald began by highlighting the benefits of the cooperative business model. For April, Vernon Electric Cooperative (VEC) refunded \$545,000 in capital credits to its members. Joe discussed VEC's strategic plan of providing superior customer service, offering stable and fair rates, and having a strong safety culture. He also presented the 2016 financials showing that VEC remains financially strong. In 2016, the Cooperative spent \$1.7 million on line maintenance and invested \$3 million in system upgrades. Projects in 2017 include clearing 290 miles of line,

installing 500 LED yard lights, and implementing a new metering system. VEC has partnered with SoCore and Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) to add another .3 MW of solar energy to DPC's 1 MW solar project near Liberty Pole. DPC recently installed another large solar project in VEC's service territory south of Hillsboro. VEC continues to offer numerous energy efficiency rebates and provides online communications with its website and Facebook page. Joe ended his presentation by reviewing flood damage from September's storms and how VEC's crews worked long and hard hours to safely get everyone's power restored.

(continued...)

## May is Safety Month –

Call Digger's Hotline at 811 before digging. May is a popular month for graduations and weddings. When having yard tents erected, you must have all utilities located underground before pounding stakes. This includes your own utility lines. Digger's Hotline will only locate wires, cables, and gas lines on the utility side of the meter. If there are wires, cables, gas or water lines in your yard after the meters, those belong to you and you must have a private locating business find those for you.

Look up! Before erecting large yard tents, or anything tall, notice where the overhead power lines are and stay away from them. Contact with those lines will cause serious injury or death.



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.



# Annual Meeting...

(...continued from front)

Dan Korn, VEC's representative on the DPC Board, gave an update on Dairyland Power Cooperative. Dan discussed DPC's 75th Anniversary celebration, the history of DPC, and its continued journey toward a true culture of safety. Some big projects DPC is working on are the dismantlement of the retired nuclear facility in Genoa, and removal of coal plant facilities, including a 400-foot stack in Alma. DPC projects significant future sales growth. Dan concluded with an explanation of the diversified resources DPC plans to use to meet that growth, including solar, wind, and natural gas.

Incumbents Jerry Kramer, Orlan Bakkum, and Ole Yttri were re-elected to three-year terms on the Board.

Twenty-one area students from the Co-op's membership were awarded \$750 scholarships. Scholarship funds are made available from unclaimed capital credits of the Cooperative.

Following the Annual Meeting, the Board re-elected Bernadine Hornby, President; Richard Nemeec, Vice President; David Dregne, Secretary; and David Olson, Treasurer.

*Congratulations to our Scholarship Winners!*



**Scholarship recipients, back row from l to r:** Jess Bishop and Spencer Berg, Westby HS; Shelby Levy, Hillsboro HS; Thomas Benacci, Aquinas HS; Elliot Jacobson, Wonewoc HS; Jonathon Kilen, Viroqua HS; Zachary Schneider, Kickapoo HS; Ben Rice, De Soto HS; Sawyer Ellsworth, Brookwood HS; Lisa Soller, Viterbo Univ. **Front row, l to r:** Connor Ludwigson, Central HS; Jansen McClelland, Viroqua HS; Karlee Kirking, Cashton HS; Allison Mitchell, Hillsboro HS; Roxanna Haakenson; De Soto HS; Clare Schultz, Luther HS; Carolyn Knobloch, Central HS. **Not pictured:** Christian Cameron, home schooled; Morgan Lemke, De Soto HS; Harley Lindvig-Springborn, Viroqua HS; and Emily Sedgwick, La Farge HS.



## #ThankALineman

Did YOU know?

It takes four years (8,000-hour apprenticeship) to achieve certification as a lineworker in the State of Wisconsin. Safety training through meetings and workshops averages 75-80 hours per lineworker, annually.

The Nation celebrated Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 18th. We are very proud of our lineworkers and the dedication they have to their profession. We here at Vernon Electric appreciate our lineworkers every day. Vernon Electric employs 14 dedicated lineworkers who often get called out in challenging conditions. We had some extreme weather this past winter causing many outages and our lineworkers safely and expertly restored everyone's power as quickly as possible during all hours of the night. If you are on social media, consider taking a moment to show your appreciation for all lineworkers. Use #ThankALineman in support of those who help power our homes and businesses.



Journeyman Lineworker, Cole Cary, climbs a steep hillside along the Mississippi River this past winter while restoring a powerline after a snow-laden tree took it down.

-Photo taken by Journeyman Lineworker, Ken Karwoski.

**Watt's New**

The information in this newsletter has been prepared for you by David Maxwell, Marketing and Communications. Comments or questions regarding information contained here should be directed to:

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