

Vernon Electric Cooperative

"Information for our member-owners."

Vernon Electric Cooperative Celebrates 82 Years at Annual Meeting



Vernon Electric Cooperative's 82nd Annual Meeting of its members was held at the Westby headquarters on March 24. Highlights from CEO & General Manager Joe McDonald's Report:

- Safety is a priority and employees were recognized for having no lost-time accidents
 - The Cooperative remains financially strong
 - Twenty \$750 scholarships were awarded to local high school students
 - Refunding \$600,000 in capital credits to members in 2018
 - Completing a rate study to ensure rates are equitable to all members
 - Accelerating right-of-way tree management and maintenance to enhance reliability
 - Completed \$4.5 million in system improvements in 2017
 - 2% rate increase expected this year
 - New metering system being installed, should be completed in 2018
 - New after-hours call center provides members with better service and more phone lines during outages
 - Sent a crew to Florida in September to help restore power from Hurricane Irma
- Dan Korn, Vernon Electric



Cooperative's representative on the Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) Board, gave an update on DPC projects:

- Removal of the decommissioned nuclear plant in Genoa is nearing completion
- Five coal-fired power units in Alma have been removed. The stack will come down in 2018
- Dairyland is partnering with Minnesota Power to build a new natural gas power plant in Superior, WI
- Invested in transmission infrastructure to improve reliability and provide access to more wind energy
- Added 15 MW of solar energy, with two big projects in Vernon County
- Added 98 MW of wind energy near Darlington, WI
- Renewable energy resources will continue to be added

Directors David Olson, Dan Korn, and Richard Nemecek were re-elected to three-year terms on the Board. Dan Giese was elected to fill the remaining one-year term in Division 6.



Dan Giese

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

Congratulations to Annual Meeting Winners - Leland Diehl, Roger DeChant, Beverly Matteson, Bonnie Labbe, Karen Diehl, Vince Pisha, Ellen Wichuta, Samantha Laskowski, Stephanie Hanson, and Alice Diehl. They each won a \$50 credit on their next electric bill.

Spring into Safety for Graduations and Weddings

May is a popular month for outdoor graduation and wedding celebrations. A time that should be festive can turn to tragedy quickly if contact is made with a power line. Ways to stay safe include:

- Call Diggers Hotline by dialing 811 at least three days before pounding stakes into the ground for a large tent or for any digging that will occur.
- Identify and stay away from overhead power lines when putting up a large tent. People inside the tent lifting tall support poles will not be able to see potential hazards in the air.
- Keep in mind Diggers Hotline only marks utility lines. They do not locate your personal wires you may have buried in your yard, between buildings, or between the house and the meter. You will need to contact an electrician with locating equipment to mark private wires.



CONGRATULATIONS

To our scholarship recipients



Trent Berg, Viroqua



Julianne Call, Westby



Payton English, Aquinas



Gracie Groth, Central



Annaliese Haas,
Hillsboro



Emily Jacobs, La Farge



Ryan Jones, Central



Thaddaeus Kauffman
At-Large



Brooke Kelsey, Sparta



Sierra Martinson
De Soto



Justin Masters, Royal



David McKittrick
Kickapoo



Allyson Nelson
Brookwood



Devon Olson, Cashton



Ivan Purgill, At-Large



Madelyn Quackenbush
Central



Rebecca Schipper
Viroqua



Dana Schreier
Kickapoo



Sydney Sherry, Westby



Makenzie Van Coulter
At-Large

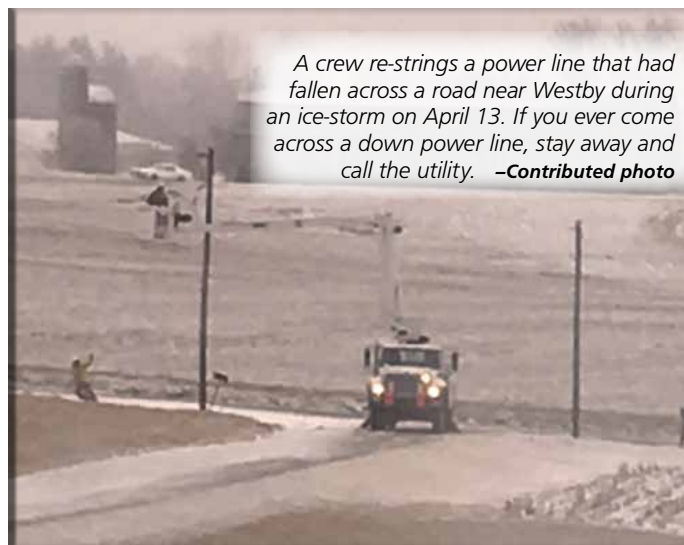
Out Like a Lion Spring ice-storm knocks out power to many

A powerful winter-like storm rolled into our area Friday night, April 13. The first outage calls started coming in at approximately 2:30 a.m. Saturday morning. As the cold rain turned to sleet, and then snow, ice began building up on overhead power lines and roads. That wouldn't have been so bad, but the wind picked up, gusting from 35-40 mph. The combination of the heavy ice on the lines, and the wind created conditions no line worker likes to see.

There were no major outages, but there were lots of small outages all over the place. Crews would get the power back on in one location, and two more outages would pop up, sometimes on the same line. Falling trees and branches caused a few of the outages, but the biggest problem was the strong wind, causing ice-laden power lines to start galloping. Energized lines would swing into each other causing sparks. The heavy, swinging lines also stressed the insulators, connectors, cross-arms and poles that hold the line up in the air. In some cases, the lines fell to the ground and had to be put back up. Slick roads were treacherous and slowed line trucks.

By about 10 a.m. Sunday morning, crews had a handle on the situation after working in terrible conditions for many hours. Fortunately, there were no injuries, and everyone made it back home to their families, safe and sound. However, many power lines and structures took a beating and we will be monitoring the system over the next few weeks for reliability issues. Craig Buros, Director

of Operations said, "Overall, our system held up well, considering the conditions. The right-of-way maintenance we've been focusing on over the last couple years is paying off. I was also glad to see our line workers come home safely. We have on-going safety training, but this group of guys are true professionals and are very good at what they do. I'm proud of the way we handled this really bad situation – it could have been much worse."



A crew re-strings a power line that had fallen across a road near Westby during an ice-storm on April 13. If you ever come across a down power line, stay away and call the utility. –Contributed photo

**Watt's
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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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