



Vernon Electric Cooperative

"Information for our member-owners."

Scholarships available from VEC

In 2021, scholarships will be made available to students whose parents or legal guardians are members of Vernon Electric Cooperative. Twenty seniors will be eligible to receive a \$750 scholarship for the college or university they decide to attend.

Applicants from the high schools listed below, plus one at-large applicant and three other students, will be chosen in a random drawing at the Vernon Electric Co-op January Board Meeting from all the completed and verified applications received for the scholarships.

- Aquinas
- Brookwood
- Cashton
- Cornerstone Christian Academy
- De Soto
- Hillsboro
- Kickapoo
- La Crosse Central
- La Farge
- Luther
- Royal
- Sparta
- Viroqua
- Westby
- Wonewoc
- Youth Initiative High School

Of all the seniors, six will be eligible to attend the Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) at UW-River Falls this summer, on a first come, first serve basis if pandemic safety guidelines allow (last year the YLC had to be canceled due to the corona virus).

The YLC is a first-class event put on by the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA), and the students are chaperoned and transported by a Vernon Electric representative. The students who attend the YLC will receive an additional \$250 added to their VEC scholarship. In addition, students will have the option to enter an essay in the WECA's Youth Leadership Congress Essay Contest and win \$1,000 for first place, \$500 for second or \$250 for third. One student from VEC's service territory could potentially win a total of \$2,000 worth of scholarship money.

Nontraditional Scholarship

This \$750 scholarship is awarded to a member who is returning to school in a two or four-year program at least three years after graduating from high school.

Line Worker Scholarship

One \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded. Anyone who is a high school senior or older, and a member of Vernon Electric Cooperative may apply. Recipients must enroll in a full-time power line program. The scholarship is awarded after the first semester. This is a one-time per member award.



The purpose of the Line Worker Scholarship is to aid and encourage men and women in the local area to pursue an electrical line worker career. Line workers make up a large percentage of Vernon Electric's workforce and are an important asset to the cooperative and community. Their primary duty is to build, maintain, and repair power lines, which are a lifeline to the community and a connection to the local economy.

Applications and guidelines can be downloaded at <https://vernonelectric.org/scholarships-applications>. You can also have a scholarship application mailed to you by calling 608-634-3121 or 1-800-447-5051. The deadline for scholarship applications to be received by Vernon Electric's office (email, mail or drop-box) is **Wednesday, January 20, 2021, 4:30 p.m.**

Scholarships are chosen in a random drawing at the January Board Meeting from all the completed and verified applications received. The winner will be announced at Vernon Electric's Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 27, 2021. These scholarship funds are made available from unclaimed capital credits of the Cooperative.

Cast your ballot for your co-op representative



Members in the following Divisions will receive a list in the mail of all the members in their township or village:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Division II | Towns of Harmony, Genoa, Freeman, and Wheatland |
| Division V | Towns of Leon, Sparta, Wells, Greenfield, Washington, and Portland |
| Division VIII | Towns of Wellington, Glendale, Forest, Union, and Bloom |

We ask that you select five members to represent you at the District Conference to be held virtually on February 13, 2021. The two lowest of the five top vote receivers will be the alternates. Your vote is important, and those elected will be invited to attend the District Conference. Business reports and work plans will be discussed, and director candidates will be selected by representatives of those divisions having elections.

Remember, when you get your ballot, choose five members, **sign the ballot envelope**, and return it to our office in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by **January 14, 2021**.



New Energy Efficiency Programs for 2021

Focus on Energy and Do Watt's Right Programs

Vernon Electric will be offering many incentive options for energy efficiency this year. Focus on Energy Programs will be available to Vernon Electric Co-op members as well as additional incentives through our Do Watt's Right Program. Details of specific incentives will be shared in this monthly newsletter as we progress through the year. In the meantime, you can find a full listing of incentives by visiting our website at www.vernonelectric.org/rebates.



Featured this month is our Heat Pump Water Heater (aka hybrid water heater) incentive:

- Vernon Electric's Do Watt's Right incentive for 2021 is \$300.
- The Federal government is offering a \$300 tax credit – see www.energystar.gov for current tax credits.
- There may be additional incentives through Wisconsin's Focus on Energy program directly through retailers.
- Vernon Electric does not require heat pump water heaters to have a load management control installed to receive a rebate.
- More details, other electric water heater rebates, and application forms can be found at www.vernonelectric.org/rebates, or by calling or emailing our office at 800-447-5051 or info@vernonelectric.org.

Heat Pump Water Heater Considerations

Heat Pump Water Heaters (HPWHs), also known as Hybrid Electric Water Heaters, are becoming more and more popular because of their super efficiency and money-saving attributes. Many HPWH models are well over 200% efficient, meaning for every dollar of energy put into them, you get over two dollars of heating back! This is compared to gas water heaters that operate around 60% efficient and standard electric water heaters that operate around 85% efficient.

HPWHs operate by capturing the heat in surrounding air and transferring that heat into the water. Since heat is simply moved from outside the water heater to inside, and not generated, tremendous efficiency can be achieved.

Here are some things to consider when thinking about purchasing a HPWH:

- HPWHs typically come with backup electric heating elements, which if operated too much, can lower savings
- HPWHs have a user interface control panel which you should become familiar with to maximize efficiency, depending on your specific situation
- HPWHs are best located in a basement
 - In the warmer, more humid months, the HPWH will help keep the basement dehumidified
 - In the colder months, the HPWH will cause the basement to get colder as it absorbs heat. This can be mitigated by venting the cold air outside
- In heat pump-only operation, the HPWH has a slower recovery time. Therefore, a unit with a similar or larger gallon capacity as your old water heater should be chosen
- HPWHs take up more space than traditional water heaters and should not be installed in small rooms because they need a large amount of air to draw heat from
- HPWHs should not be installed in a conditioned space since they will draw heat from whatever is heating the room. Wood stoves or wood furnaces may be an exception
- HPWHs will need a nearby drain to dispose of water from condensation buildup on its evaporator coils
- HPWHs have an air filter that will need periodic cleaning
- Consider accessibility to components on your new HPWH in case it ever needs to be serviced

\$100,000 Returned to Members in December



I am happy to report that reduced operating costs and lower wholesale energy prices in 2020 have allowed Vernon Electric Co-op to provide each of our co-op members with a PCA (Power Cost Adjustment) credit. You will see this PCA credit on your December power bill arriving in email and mailboxes the first week of January 2021.

I thank our wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power, and the Vernon Electric directors and employees for continuing to look for ways to reduce costs while continuing to provide innovative, safe, and reliable electric service to our members.

—Craig Buros, CEO & General Manager

happy new year

**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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www.vernonelectric.org • E-mail: info@vernonelectric.org
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