

# WATT'S HAPPENING

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

LANCASTER, DARLINGTON AND GAYS MILLS, WISCONSIN

## *Straight talk about . . . the basics of electricity*

### ***Electric power is supplied through a system divided into three parts: generation, transmission and distribution.***

- The nation's electric system, commonly referred to as the "grid," relies on a network of power plants, transmission lines, and distribution facilities woven together in an intricate web to provide electricity.
- Generation power plants produce electricity from sources that include coal, natural gas, nuclear, hydroelectric, wind, solar, waste-to-energy sources such as landfill gas and livestock manure, as well as geothermal.
- Transmission lines carry high-voltage electricity from the generation power plant to substations of the utility where voltage is decreased before it is distributed. Typically, 69,000 volts enter the substation, which is converted to 7,200 volts that leave through the distribution lines.
- Electricity is then distributed through overhead or underground distribution lines from the utility's substations to pole or pad-mounted transformers that reduce the voltage to 120/240 volts for safe use in homes and businesses.

### ***Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative gets its electric power from Dairyland Power Cooperative, a generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative based in La Crosse, Wis.***

- Coal is the fuel source for about 95 percent of Dairyland's current electricity generation, while renewable resources account for about 5 percent. More than half of the nation's overall electric production, and more than two-thirds of the electric cooperatives' generation is from coal.
- Over 60 percent of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative's expenses account for the wholesale power bill from Dairyland.
- Coal is transported to Dairyland's coal-fired generating stations by rail car and/or barge.
- Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative and Dairyland strongly support generation from renewable sources. Dairyland's members have taken the following aggressive stance on renewable energy: "Recognizing the challenges involved in siting, permitting and constructing renewable resources, we commit our cooperative to work diligently toward achieving a 25 percent level of renewable energy by 2025."

### ***Dairyland and its member cooperatives support clean coal technology.***

- Weston 4, located in Wausau, Wisconsin, is one of the cleanest coal-fueled power plants in the country. A high-efficiency boiler and a state-of-the-art emission control system, in combination with the use of low-sulfur coals as a fuel source are helping to keep emissions low. Dairyland owns 30 percent of the plant, while Wisconsin Public Service Corporation owns 70 percent and operates the facility.
- Dairyland is making significant investments in its existing facilities to comply with environmental regulations.
- Thirty years ago the average cost for a coal-fired generating unit was approximately \$400 per kWh. Today, a new unit costs nearly \$1,800 per kWh.
- Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) estimates it will take a research investment of \$1.4 billion a year nationally from now until 2030 to develop new technology such as carbon capture and storage for our power plants. This expense will ultimately be paid by the consumer and will show up on your electric bill. (EPRI conducts research on issues of interest to the electric power industry in the USA.)

*Continued . . .*

## Heating Questions on the line



Continued . . .

### *Straight talk about . . . the basics of electricity*

- Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is the main greenhouse gas that comes from burning fossil fuels, including the use of coal to make electricity. Over the past 30 years, America's coal-based electricity providers have invested over \$50 billion in technologies to reduce emissions. As a result of that commitment, today's coal-based generating plants are 70 percent cleaner on the basis of regulated emissions per unit of energy produced.
- Energy is changing in America. Our global demand is growing and we must find a way to balance environmental responsibility. Start a dialogue with your elected officials at [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) to ensure electricity remains affordable and reliable for the future.

### *Statement of Nondiscrimination*

Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative is a recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Richard Kolb, CEO of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative. To file a complaint of discrimination, write U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication and Compliance, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call 202/260-1026 or 800/795-3272.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is an Equal Opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

### *What kind of space heater should I purchase?*

If you are feeling the pinch in today's economic trials and you are thinking about cutting your heating expenses with space heaters, you are not alone. Don't be fooled, space heating will increase your electric bill, possibly increasing your heating costs. Before making your purchase do some research! Most electric heaters, except ultra high-efficiency heat pumps, are rated at 1,500 watts, so they all deliver exactly the same amount of heat energy. They also have exactly the same efficiency - 100%. The only difference is how the heat is conveyed to the user, either by a focused radiant heat, or by warming the air that travels across the heating surface.

If you wish to utilize electric heat, we encourage you to employ our load management system to shift on-peak usage to off-peak usage. If you have an automatic backup heating source or storage heat system, you could qualify for a reduced dual fuel rate. By utilizing this approach, you not only save money, but you also help keep costs down by avoiding peak time.

### *During the day I turn my thermostat down to 59 degrees and then when I get home from work I turn it up to 72 degrees. It seems like I am using more energy to heat my house up than I am saving by turning it down. Is that true?*

One very common energy savings estimate for temperature setback is 1% per degree for every 8 hours of temperature setback or setforward. In other words, if the temperature setback were to be carried out for 16 hours, it would amount to a 2% energy savings of heating or cooling energy use. Be sure to treat this rule of thumb as a rough estimate.

The EERE Consumer's Guide to Thermostats and Control Systems states the following:

### **General Thermostat Operation**

You can easily save energy in the winter by setting the thermostat to 68 degrees while you're awake and setting it lower while you're asleep or away from home. By turning your thermostat back 10-15 degrees for 8 hours, you can save about 5-15% a year on your heating bill- a savings of as much as 1% for each degree if the setback period is eight hours long. The percentage of savings from setback is greater for buildings in milder climates than for those in more severe climates.

In the summer, you can follow the same strategy with central air conditioning, too, by keeping your house warmer than normal when you are away, and lowering the thermostat setting to 78 degrees Fahrenheit only when you are at home and need cooling. Although thermostats can be adjusted manually, programmable thermostats will avoid any discomfort by returning temperatures to normal as you wake or return home.

A common misconception associated with thermostats is that a furnace works harder than normal to warm the space back to a comfortable temperature after the thermostat has been set back, resulting in little or no savings. This misconception has been dispelled by years of research and numerous studies. The fuel required to reheat a building to a comfortable temperature is roughly equal to the fuel saved as the building drops to the lower temperature. You save fuel between the time that the temperature stabilizes at the lower level and the next time heat is needed. So, the longer your house remains at the lower temperature, the more energy you save.

## ***Environmental Update- Smart Solutions for Our Energy Future***

The dust has settled from the fall election, and this month we turn our eyes to Washington, D.C., as Barack Obama takes office as the 44th president of the United States. The economic crisis will remain a major focus for elected officials over coming years, and the Obama Administration also promises an increased focus on energy policy. As all of us paying electric bills every month can attest to, the two go hand-in-hand. It is crucial that any energy policy discussed in Washington comes with a price tag that won't leave consumers in the dark.

Through the nationwide grassroots awareness campaign called Our Energy, Our Future™, co-op consumers have contacted their elected officials with three critical energy policy questions focused on capacity, technology, and affordability. With a new president and a new Congress taking office, electric cooperatives will need to continue pressing for answers.

These answers won't be clear-cut. Day to day, Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative works hard to provide you with safe, affordable,

and reliable electricity. When you come home at night you can count on a well-lit home, and should outages occur, we're on the job to restore power quickly.

Although electricity use across the United States is steadily climbing, relatively high costs for construction materials and uncertainty about climate change goals, which could place strict limits on carbon dioxide emitted by power plants, have stalled development of new baseload generation: the large, efficient stations that provide dependable and affordable electric power year-round.

So here's the important question: how can we keep power flowing and electric bills affordable? There's simply no single answer, and electric co-ops know from experience that it will take a variety of new generation resources and technologies to ensure reliable and affordable electricity in the coming years. We must invest in renewable energy, clean coal technology, nuclear power, an updated transmission grid, and improvements in energy efficiency across the board.

Of course, implementing all of

this on a large scale will require a massive investment of government resources and leadership—similar to putting a man on the moon. As consumer advocates and industry leaders, electric co-ops can provide lawmakers with expertise on what programs are affordable, sustainable, and technologically feasible.

All of this must be grounded in goals and public policy that puts consumers first. This is no time for policy makers to ignore our needs with a wink and a nod to special interest groups. Now, more than ever, Main Street must come before Wall Street.

You can help in this effort and make a real impact by telling members of congress your story—why affordable electricity is important to you and your family. Tens of thousands of electric co-op members have done so already, and as a result we've sent more than 1.5 million messages to Congress, calling attention to our nation's impending electricity crisis.

Please visit [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) today. Make your voice heard and help guide policymakers toward a smart, affordable energy future.

### ***Did you know?***

#### ***According to Energy Star***

Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, saved more than \$16 billion on their utility bills while preventing greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 27 million vehicles.

- Americans purchased about 500 million ENERGY STAR qualified products from across more than 50 product categories.
- Almost 840,000 new homes across the country now bear the ENERGY STAR.
- More than 4,000 commercial buildings and almost 40 industrial plants have earned the ENERGY STAR for superior energy efficiency.



## Currently Cooking:

### Pesto Stuffed Chicken

*This recipe is taken from [www.momswhothink.com](http://www.momswhothink.com)*

#### Ingredients:

- 2/3 cup ricotta cheese
- 4 Tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 3 Tablespoons prepared pesto (from your grocer)
- 2 Tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 6 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (2 ¾ pounds)
- Wooden toothpick
- 1 egg
- ¾ cup Italian seasoned dry breadcrumbs



#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Spray jelly roll pan with cooking spray.
2. In bowl, combine ricotta, 3Tbs. of the parsley, pesto and Parmesan.
3. Transfer mixture to plastic food storage bag, snip a hole in one corner, set aside.
4. Cut a 2" deep horizontal pocket into each chicken breast.
5. Dividing evenly, pipe ricotta mixture into pockets. Secure with toothpicks.
6. In a shallow bowl, lightly beat egg. Spread breadcrumbs on wax paper.
7. Dip each piece of chicken into the egg, then coat with breadcrumbs.
8. Place on pan, coat chicken with cooking spray.
9. Bake chicken until no longer pink inside, about 20 minutes.
10. Sprinkle remaining parsley evenly over chicken pieces, serve hot.

## Power Your Mind – Learn who is bringing you power

### Joel Grimsled Crawford District Supervisor

#### Family-

- Wife: Karen
- Kids: Jessica, Jennifer, Jacob

#### Hobbies-

- Hunting, Camping, Fishing

#### Why did you choose to become employed at SREC?

I was born and raised in Crawford County and wanted to stay here to raise my family. SREC was and continues to be a great place to work.



#### What do you enjoy most about your job at SREC?

I enjoy meeting with new members and helping to set up their power needs. I also enjoy assisting with the needs and concerns of existing members.

## Looking for the Load Control Status?

#### Internet

Try logging on to [www.sre.coop](http://www.sre.coop), and clicking on the Load Control Status at the bottom of the page. You will then either click "Residential" or "Commercial" to learn what is currently being controlled.

#### Text

Have a cell phone? Text the word ENERGY to 50857 and receive load management status changes when they happen.

Either way you decide to receive your information, please consider doing your part to keep energy costs down by conserving energy when Dairyland Power Cooperative goes into "control" status. The more load that is shed, the less energy that has to be purchased on the market at high prices, the lower your electric bill stays. Do your part today!

## WATT'S HAPPENING

*Watt's Happening* is published monthly as an information service to the member-owners of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative.

Any questions or comments can be directed to *Watt's Happening*, c/o Megan Graney, Editor, Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, 231 North Sheridan, Lancaster, WI 53813 or telephone (608) 723-2121 or toll free Lancaster 800-236-2141, Darlington 800-236-6656, and Gays Mills 888-735-4314.

[www.sre.coop](http://www.sre.coop)

Richard E. Kolb. . . . . CEO  
Megan Graney. . . . . Editor

Our board of directors consists of Tom Bennett, Don Walters, Sandy Davidson, Norman Gordon, Gerald Koeller, David Stute, Merlin Kvigne, Larry Butson, and Ellen Conley.



printed on recycled paper