

# YLC BUILDS TOMORROW'S LEADERS

The Youth Leadership Conference (YLC) is a unique opportunity for local high school sophomores and juniors. Students from across Wisconsin participate.

The YLC is not just lectures and presentations; it's an interactive experience where students collaborate, problem-solve, and develop practical skills that they can apply in their everyday lives. By the end of this three-day event, attendees have a deeper understanding of what it means to be a great leader and how they can make a positive impact on their peers, schools, and communities.



## Fast Facts about YLC:

- YLC will be held July 16–18 at UW-Stout in Menomonie.
- JREC covers all conference expenses and provides transportation.
- Students elected to the conference youth board can attend the annual National Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., the following June.
- Essay contest provides an opportunity to earn money for college.
- Watch this video to get a peek at what this conference is about: [vimeo.com/882169063](https://vimeo.com/882169063).
- Contact your high school guidance counselor or call JREC by May 30 to register.

We encourage area youth to to participate in this fun event where the activities can lead to valuable learning experiences and personal growth. Learn more at [jrec.com/youth-leadership-conference](https://jrec.com/youth-leadership-conference).

# THE POWER OF WORKING TOGETHER

## Community Cents donations awarded!

At Jump River Electric Cooperative (JREC), we are committed not only to delivering reliable, safe, sustainable, and affordable utility services to our members, but also to extending our support to the communities we serve. Guided by the principle of Concern for Community, JREC incorporates community support into how we do business.

Community Cents demonstrates the power of collective action in effecting positive change in our community. One of the adages used to describe this program is “Small change can make a big difference.” Through this member-driven program, participants opt to round up their electric bill to the nearest dollar, with the extra change contributing to the Community Cents fund.

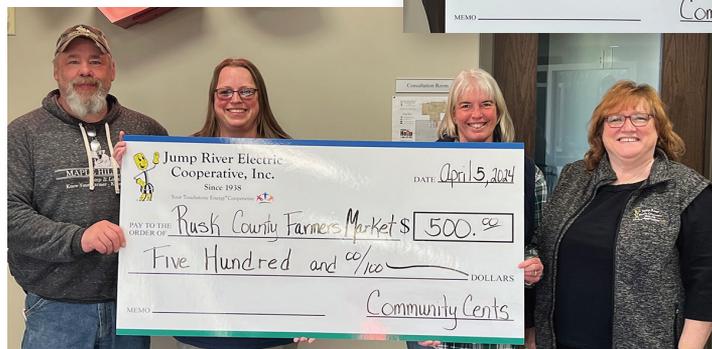
“A big thank you to all our members who participate in the Community Cents program! Your contributions will directly benefit the communities we serve,” said General Manager/CEO Kurt Harris. “We are excited to announce the distribution of our inaugural Community Cents donations to nonprofit organizations in April.”

The average annual donation per member is approximately \$6. Members have the flexibility to make a one-time contribution or opt for recurring monthly donations. If you are interested in joining this initiative, please go to [jrec.com/community-cents](https://jrec.com/community-cents) or refer to the sign-up form on the back of your energy bill.



The Ladysmith Fire Department was awarded \$1,000 to assist in replacing the flat bed of their utility truck. JREC's Member Service Representative (MSR) Vicky Ringstad presented the check to Fire Chief Kyle Gibbs.

Laura Jennerman (left) accepted the \$500 contribution on behalf of the Rusk Area Arts Alliance from JREC's Executive Assistant/HR/Office Supervisor Jennifer Belk. This money will help support the summer Music in the Park program, which provides weekly concerts. For a schedule of their events, visit [ruskarts.org](https://ruskarts.org).



A \$500 check was given to the Rusk County Farmers Market. JREC MSR Denise Zimmer (far right) presented this check to Vice President Brian Michielson, President

Charmaine Riddle, and Market Manager Kathy Halbur. This contribution will help support the Double Value Coupon Program that benefits participants in Rusk County's WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program and Rusk County low-income seniors.



## HERE'S HOW IT ALL BEGAN...

It was around 51 years ago when a third-grade student wrote a letter to Mr. Cleary (then general manager of JREC) asking him if her dad, former line superintendent Bernie Rydlund, could come and tell her class about the dangers of electricity and how to be safe. As the saying goes, “the rest is history.”

Member Shelley Barg was that student, and she recalls sending this letter and said, “My dad had no idea I sent the letter until Mr. Cleary shared it with him. This makes my heart so happy and proud to know that the letter I wrote way back then is still benefiting and keeping children safe today.”

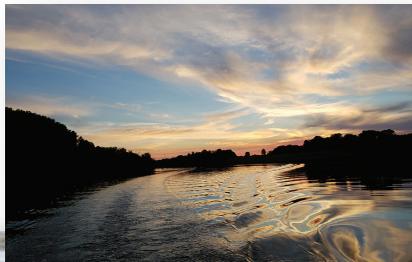
We continue to use a portion of the original demonstration unit that was built back then to help make this little girl’s wish come true. This unit helps us demonstrate what happens in a vehicle accident involving downed power lines.

Each safety demonstration begins the same, with a dedication to the man who started this electrical safety program those many years ago, Bernie Rydlund. Shelly is shown at right holding a picture of her dad, Bernie, which is the same picture used for our safety demonstration dedication.



Safety is a priority for JREC, which is why you’ll see our linemen teaching elementary-school students how to be safe around electricity in and outside the home. Students are also taught about the dangers of electricity through the antics of Lightning Liz, Neon Leon, and Oscar Meyer. During March and April, over 450 local students and teachers received this safety message.

First place:  
Lisa Anderson,  
Ladysmith



Third place:  
Marcia Suchy,  
Coudery



Second place:  
Amy Krumenauer, Ladysmith

## CAPTURED BRILLIANCE Celebrating Our Photo Contest Winners

If you missed this contest, no worries. We will be holding another one later this year. As you can see by these winning photos, this contest gives you an opportunity to showcase your talent and creativity behind the lens. Let your images speak volumes and share your unique vision of what living in rural Wisconsin looks like. Stay tuned for details on how to participate, and please continue to capture moments that inspire!



### Cooperation Among Cooperatives

## PUTTING PRINCIPLE #6 INTO ACTION

Being part of a cooperative comes with numerous benefits, including Principle #6: Cooperation Among Cooperatives. Recently, this principle was exemplified through the cooperative’s mutual assistance program known as ROPE—Restoration of Power in an Emergency.

On April 2, a severe spring snowstorm heavily impacted Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC), located in Oconto Falls, leaving approximately 9,000 (or about 90 percent) of OEC’s members without power. In response, the ROPE program was activated, and several Wisconsin cooperatives, including Jump River Electric, came forward to answer the call for help.

This isn’t the first instance of Jump River Electric extending support to fellow cooperatives following a severe weather event. On this occasion, linemen Ben Valentin and Calvin Wiener from our Hayward outpost, along with Rowdy Kochevar and Kevin Wright from Ladysmith, traveled east to OEC’s service territory. Despite the demanding conditions,

long hours, and challenging work, our linemen demonstrated their dedication and expertise as they worked tirelessly to restore power.

Cooperatives thrive when they unite their efforts for the collective good of their members. It’s all about people helping people. This time, we extended our support to OEC, but in the future, it could be another cooperative lending a hand to our members in need after a severe storm. It’s what co-ops do.



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# PREVENT DEADLY SHOCKS:

## Check Your Boats and Docks

With Memorial Day weekend ushering in the unofficial start of summer, many people will be taking advantage of the many lakes, resorts, and boat landings right in our backyard. Before taking part in water recreation activities, review the steps to prevent Electric Shock Drowning (ESD).

ESD means that someone is being exposed to wayward electrical current in water, usually from faulty wiring—a danger you cannot see or detect just by looking. Many people have never heard of ESD or don't even know it's a possibility when swimming, wading, boating, or hot tubbing.

We are not suggesting that wayward electricity lurks in all water, but it is important to be aware that water can become electrified and it can paralyze muscles, leaving a swimmer unable to move or stay afloat, causing electric shock drowning.

If you own a boat and/or a dock, make sure all electrical equipment has been properly installed and maintained. Take the time to inspect all electrical systems on or near the water.

- All electrical installations should be performed by a professional electrical contractor familiar with marine codes and standards and inspected at least once a year.
- Docks should have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) breakers on the circuits feeding electricity to the dock.
- The metal frame of docks should be bonded to connect all metal parts to the alternating current (AC) safety ground at the power source. That will ensure any part



of the metal dock that becomes energized because of electrical malfunction will trip the circuit breaker.

- Neighboring docks can also present a shock hazard. Make your neighbors aware of the need for safety inspections and maintenance. Marinas should comply with NFPA and NEC codes.

Tips to remember for your boat's electrical system, particularly those with AC systems:

- Maintenance of the electrical system should be done by a professional familiar with marine electrical codes.
- Have your boat's electrical system checked at least once a year. Boats should also be checked when something is added to or removed from their systems.
- Boats with AC systems should have isolation transformers or equipment leakage circuit interrupter (ELCI) protection, comply with ABYC standards, and be serviced by an ABYC Certified® Technician.

If you are in the water and feel electric current, shout to let others know, tuck your legs up to make yourself smaller, and try to go away from anything that could be energized. Do not head to the boat or dock ladders to get out.

If you are on the dock or shore when a swimmer feels electrical current, do not jump in; throw them a flotation device. Unplug or turn off the source of electricity as quickly as possible, and then call 911 for help.

**FUN**

**FOOD**

**GAMES**

**It's almost picnic time!**

Get out those calendars and pencil in the date of the Member Appreciation Picnic nearest you!

**June 26 – Jump River**  
**June 27 – Hayward office**  
**June 28 – Ladysmith office**

Details will be included in next month's issue of this magazine and online at [jrec.com](http://jrec.com).

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Denise Zimmer, Editor



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**JREC Offices will be closed Monday, May 27 for Memorial Day.**