



WHAT'S BEHIND THE RED FRONT DOOR?



In last month's feature, "Finding a House to Call Home," we explored the new home construction process of Jackson Electric members Dan and Jennifer McKeivitt from the planning stages through the framing of their home. We left our readers with a question: *What's behind the red front door?* This month, Dan and Jennifer welcome you into the kitchen and living areas of their home, sharing some of the decisions they had to make for the inside of their home during the construction process.

Heart of the Home Tour: Kitchen and Living Areas

1. Appliances When shopping for appliances, Dan and Jennifer sought those that were Energy Star rated. An appliance with the Energy Star label meets strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy. These appliances are more energy efficient than similar items that don't carry the label and oftentimes qualify for rebates or incentives. The dishwasher and refrigerator were each eligible for Jackson Electric's rebate program, which rewards members for energy efficiency purchases.

2. Plumbing The couple met with a plumber to discuss what they were going to do plumbing-wise and pick out their fixtures. "The advantage of working with a plumber is that they stand behind what they sell," says Dan. "Plus, there's some warranty, which you won't receive if you pick out and install your own fixtures."

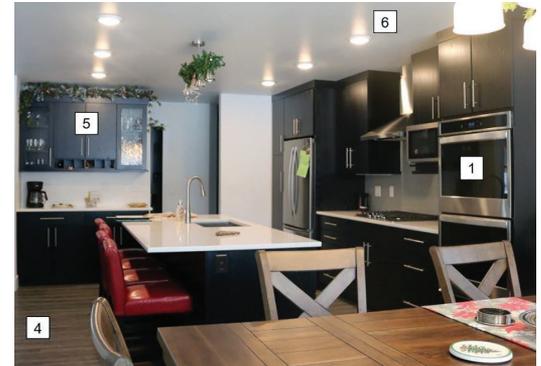


3. Countertops Do some research before you make a decision on your countertops. Shopping for countertops is about more than the sticker price. You'll also want to know how to properly care for and maintain each type of surface. Some countertops require routine sealing, while others are relatively maintenance free.

4. Flooring Consider your flooring color when making other color decisions. If you don't find the color you want from one company, don't settle for something that's not what you want. Don't be afraid to expand your search. Dan and Jennifer searched in several places before finding this color option through a local business.

5. Cabinetry, Hardware, Backsplash Remember what Jennifer said about decision-making in the last issue: "Having an idea of what you like helps you make cohesive decisions so that everything fits together, from the flooring to the cabinetry."

As you can see, Jennifer's folder of styles and colors paid off in the design of this living space. Know what type of cabinets you want and what style of hardware will be installed on the cabinets. Do you want a backsplash?

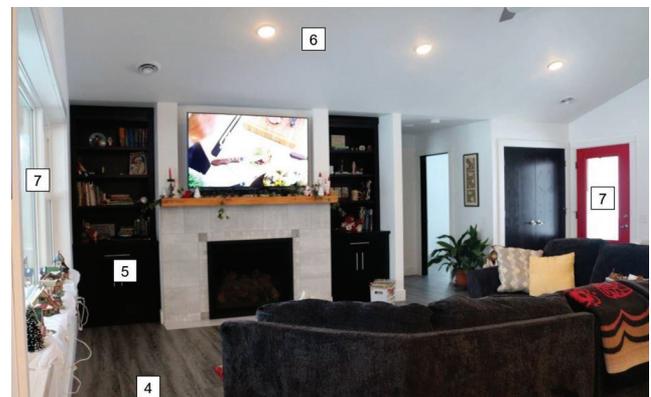


6. LED Lighting Dan and Jennifer recommend discussing your energy efficiency needs with your contractor. "We were able to purchase our own lighting, and we looked for the Energy Star and LED labels, which have 75 to 80 percent energy efficiency," shares Dan. (LED bulbs also qualify for a Jackson Electric rebate).

Your electrician will ask about what type of lighting you're going to have and where it's going to go. For example, if you're going to install a chandelier, it's helpful for the electrician to know that. Or, if you plan to have cabinet lighting, both the electrician and the cabinet designers need to work together to coordinate the design and placement of the lighting.

7. Windows and Doors Energy-efficient windows and doors save energy while also bringing natural light into the living space.

(Continued on page 18)





A willingness to go the extra mile

LINEMAN RETIRES AFTER 42 YEARS OF SERVICE

Jackson Electric lineman David Ripp has always been willing to go the extra mile for the cooperative and its members since he was hired on May 10, 1982. Before joining the Jackson Electric team, David worked as an apprentice for one year at Sturgeon Bay Utilities, and he continued his apprenticeship at Eau Claire Energy Cooperative from 1979 to 1982. After 42 years of combined experience, David has recently retired from the work he found rewarding for so many years.

When it came to choosing his career path after high school, David knew he wanted to do outdoor work, and a lineworker position appealed to him. "I applied to Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) to enroll in the electrical distribution program in May of 1978, and I don't regret it," David says.

Asked about David's service to the cooperative, Line Superintendent Eric Steien shares: "David has been a great asset in working with our apprentices and sharing his knowledge about our system, new line construction, and maintenance over the years. He was a hard worker and always willing to go that extra mile for the cooperative, whether that was on the job or helping at the member picnic."

David's commitment to the cooperative is evident when he speaks about the challenges and rewards of the lineworker position. He notes the long hours and weather extremes that accompany power restoration efforts as some of the challenges of the job, referencing the 35-hour power restoration efforts over the week of Thanksgiving. However, these challenges become rewards. "Restoring power after an outage is gratifying," David shares. "There's also pride in getting work accomplished and making improvements to our system through line

rebUILds and new construction."

A willingness to go the extra mile is also expressed through what David recalls as one of his most memorable moments on the job. "I travelled to Cresco, Iowa, to assist Hawkeye Electric on a ROPE (Restoration of Power in an Emergency) call," David shares. "I was working in a different area for nine days and met a lot of new people."

ROPE is a program that allows utilities to call upon each other for assistance when a major storm or natural disaster takes out power in the service territory beyond what the utility can restore on its own.

During his employment at Jackson Electric, David enjoyed working around people and the camaraderie that accompanies the job. "Over the years, I enjoyed working in different areas throughout our system and talking with our members," says David. "There are areas I've travelled through as part of the job that I won't see regularly anymore. I'm going to miss staying in touch with people and knowing what's going on."

Now that he's retired, David plans to do farm work, snowmobile, hunt, fish, travel, and spend more time visiting his grandkids in Minnesota. He would like to leave our members with a final remark: "Thank you for your patience during lengthy outages as our line crew works long hours to restore power."—Brandi Shramek, Executive Coordinator



David poses with some of the safety equipment used by lineworkers.

David joined the JEC team in 1982. These photos depict David's fifth year on the job, completing the outdoor work he enjoys.




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Change of Address

Starting May 1, 2020, Jackson Electric will no longer be utilizing a P.O. Box to receive mail. All mail sent to Jackson Electric must be addressed to:

Jackson Electric Cooperative
N6868 County Road F
Black River Falls, WI 54615

ONE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE LEADS TO ANOTHER

“It all started because of homemakers,” shares Lois Smetana of rural Black River Falls.

Lois has been an active member of the Jackson County HCE Homemakers for 58 years. She highlights the many sewing projects she has completed during her involvement with the group: bibs and burp cloths, nursing covers for WIC, sanitary items for developing countries, and quilts that were sent to Nicaragua.

That’s where one volunteer experience led to another. Lois learned about the Friends’ Food Shelf in 2008 through her homemakers’ group when longtime community volunteer Carol Anderson recruited her to get involved. Lois agreed, began volunteering, and eventually became the Friends’ Food Shelf coordinator in 2014. “You can always learn more than what you thought you knew,” explains Lois. “I was unaware of how many people were going without food.”

Friends’ Food Shelf is one of four programs under the Friends Sharing Food, Inc. umbrella organization. Though the Friends’ Food Shelf is open to Jackson County residents every Monday from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., Lois starts



Lois Smetana poses by a food donation provided by a local business and its clients.

preparation at 8 a.m. every Monday.

The day starts by moving carts of food that was delivered on Friday to the distribution area. A volunteer brings a truck filled with items from Kwik Trip, such as bread, sweets, dairy, and salads. By 9 a.m., another volunteer driver brings a truck with dry food, dairy, and produce from Hansen’s IGA. Finally, the last truck arrives at 9:45 a.m. with goods from Wal-Mart. “We have five wonderful volunteer truck drivers that pick up the food,” Lois adds.

At 1 p.m., the tables are set up in the distribution area, all the delivered items are organized, and the produce is bagged before the patrons arrive. “Our volun-

teers enjoy chatting with each other and the patrons,” says Lois. “It’s great companionship.”

Lois and the other volunteers are usually able to have everything cleaned up by 4:45 p.m. after the Food Shelf closes, but the volunteering doesn’t stop there. In addition to the preparation it takes to serve 90 to 115 families each week, Lois also keeps track of volunteer hours and miles, which are reported each month to the Friends Sharing Food Board of Directors and the Feed My People Food Bank in Eau Claire. She also oversees any donations that may come in.

“Knowing that you’re helping people is rewarding,” Lois shares. “If you want to get involved, go for it. It’s a wonderful experience, and I can’t say enough about it.” —*Brandi Shramek, Executive Coordinator*

If you would like to get involved with the Friends Sharing Food organizations, please contact any of the program coordinators.

Friends’ Food Shelf: Lois – 715.284.5598

Jackson County Food Pantry: Jon – 715.896.3601

Neighborhood Food Pantry: Debi – 715.284.1688

Food for Kids: Mary – 715.284.9365

ANNUAL MEETING RULES

These rules are set in accordance with Jackson Electric Cooperative Bylaws, Article II, Section 7. Jackson Electric Cooperative’s annual meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, at the Lunda Theatre in Black River Falls.

1. The meeting will be conducted in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised edition.
2. Any speaker must be recognized by the Chair before speaking.
3. Only members and duly registered guests will be recognized by the Chair; each person so recognized must give his or her name.
4. Unless otherwise approved by the Chair, those recognized are to limit their questions and comments to three minutes, with any rebuttal limited to two minutes.
5. Questions and comments from members and duly registered guests will be in order during old and new business sessions, and at the conclusion of the officer reports, if invited.
6. No resolution affecting Jackson Electric Cooperative may be submitted by any member, unless written copies have been received by Jackson Electric Cooperative by January 10, 2020. This will permit time for review by the Jackson Electric Cooperative Board of Directors to make its recommendation to the meeting as to approval or rejection.
7. No signs or handouts will be permitted within the building of the place of the meeting, except such handouts as required for the official conduct of the Annual Meeting. No handouts made available outside of the building will use the name of the Cooperative, its letterhead or logo to imply that the Cooperative supports or opposes any resolution.
8. No demonstrations shall be held within the building of the place of the meeting.

Annual Meeting Voting Procedures

Voting may be by voice vote (one vote per membership)

Bring Your Gently Used Eyeglasses to Jackson Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting



Support our area Lions Clubs:

Alma Center
Black River Falls
Fairchild
Merrillan
Pigeon Falls
Mindoro
Neillsville
North Bend
Sparta
Warrens



Used eyeglasses are shipped to the Wisconsin Lions Foundation Eyeglass Recycling Center where they are sorted, washed, read, and packaged. The eyeglasses are then stored at the Center until they are requested for eyeglass-dispensing missions to developing countries.



The Lions Clubs are also collecting hearing aids which can also be dropped in the eyeglass collection bucket.

Tuesday, April 7, 2020
Business meeting at 7 p.m.
Lunda Theatre in Black River Falls

Your annual report will be included with the April WECN



L-R: The crew sets up the equipment needed to remove and replace this rejected pole near County Road N and C in Franklin. The cable is detached from the existing pole. The existing pole is removed. The crew prepares to set the new pole.



POLE CHANGES FOR SERVICE RELIABILITY AND SAFETY

Utility poles are everywhere. You pass them by on your daily commute. They deliver power to your street, your home. These poles are the backbone of our industry and a reminder of the citizens who advocated to electrify our rural areas. While some of the original poles have withstood the test of time, others have been replaced as part of Jackson Electric’s annual line maintenance work plan.

Each year, Jackson Electric cycles 2,500 poles through a testing rotation conducted by a contractor, American Energy Services. This past year, poles were surveyed in the Irving and Shamrock Substation areas. The contractor uses a sonic test machine on the poles, analyzing the sonic signal to determine whether the pole is approved or rejected.

The signal signifies pole strength, decay, and the presence of insect or animal damage. A pole in seemingly good condition could have base and ground level problems, and wet areas in the service territory are often the culprit. The contractor may also find visual issues, such as loose hardware or damage caused by rodents.

Once the contractor has completed testing, a system map of the rejected poles is generated. The crew reviews the map, evaluates what equipment is needed for each replacement, and begins changing out the poles during the winter months, while the ground is frozen in the wet areas that our trucks and equipment can’t always access otherwise.



The red ribbon tied around this pole indicates it did not pass the pole survey.

Additionally, our contractor is now numbering every pole inspected, providing each with a GPS coordinate. The structure information and equipment is linked to each individual pole. These GPS coordinates and linked information will allow us to create an inventory of our current system, making it more efficient for our crew to bring up a pole on the system map. These GPS identifiers will also be helpful for staking new builds, and Digger’s Hotline may use them for locates.

During the recent pole survey, there was a 2–3 percent pole rejection rate, which has been normal for our system over the past several years. Every pole tested, rejected, and replaced increases service reliability and decreases safety hazards. Every pole not changed is a potential outage and safety concern.

Behind the Red Front Door (Continued from page 15)

Are you ready for a new build? A fixer upper? Either way, there will be decisions to make along the way. Remember to have a budget, expect the unexpected, and realize that a project may take longer than anticipated. While Dan and Jennifer’s project may seem perfect, their build was delayed two months due to the availability of the concrete subcontractor and rainy weather. So far, Dan and Jennifer enjoy their new home and haven’t found anything that they would’ve done differently. — *Brandi Shramek, Executive Coordinator*

Planning a new construction project in 2020 that will need electric service? If so, please contact Jackson Electric so that we can discuss your electric service needs with you.



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Customer Service 715.284.5385
800.370.4607
Outage Reporting 855.222.DARK (3275)
Diggers Hotline 800.242.8511
Credit Card Payments 844.759.3984
www.jackelec.com



Mailing Address: P.O. Box 546
Black River Falls, WI 54615
Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Board of Directors: Gary Woods, President
Chris Curran, Vice President
David Peasley, Secretary-Treasurer
Jerry Huber, Dairyland Power Representative
Daniel Smrekar, Kristi Hanson, Stanley Gran, Brian Huber, Jerry Wagner

Kevin Babcock, General Manager/CEO

Jackson Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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