

# WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER:

## COVID-19 Doesn't Stop Volunteerism

It's often said that each individual has a unique skill or talent that can be shared with others. The uncertainty of COVID-19 hasn't stopped these people from sharing their gifts with others. In fact, in the midst of COVID-19, the value of volunteerism is stronger than ever. While volunteers may have had to adapt to social distancing standards or modify their approach to volunteering, they never stopped.

### One Stitch at a Time

COVID-19 didn't stop the volunteer efforts of sisters Anita Lien, Carrie Steien, and Jean Olson. Before the pandemic, the sisters had been meeting regularly to sew quilt tops as part of a Children's Vision mission project through Anita's church. The church group then completes the quilts and delivers them to Bangor, a neighboring town, where they are loaded on a semi. The quilts are then distributed to an orphanage in Colombia.

"I enjoy having a chance to talk and visit with my sisters while doing something for others. The three of us used to work together at the same place, and when we retired, we decided to get together regularly to talk, reminisce, and learn," shares Jean. "Anita got us all into this. She's our oldest sister and a very good teacher."

When the sisters learned about the need for masks, they quickly learned how they could use their sewing talents to meet another need. Anita has grandchildren who work in health care, and they talked about how they didn't have masks to wear outside of work. "I also heard on the radio that they were asking for masks, so we switched over to mask making," shares Anita. "It started out as something we were doing together; now with social distancing, we're making them in our own homes, as there is a continuous need for them."

"We found the instructions online and turned our quilting day into a mask-making day," says Carrie. "We had fun—we

Sisters Anita Lien (l), Carrie Steien, and Jean Olson (not pictured) shifted from sewing quilts to making masks for the community.

The sisters normally get together once a week to work on quilt tops for Children's Vision.



quilt because it's fun—and we've accomplished something that is helping other people," she adds.

While the mask making was fun, the process wasn't without challenges. With a shortage of elastic, the sisters had it mailed to them by Anita's granddaughter in Las Vegas. In adhering to social distancing, the sisters also could no longer get together for their weekly meetings. "Anita cuts out the patterns and hangs them on the door for us to take home to sew," says Carrie.

If you've been thinking about how you could make a difference with your talents, Anita advises: "Just ask around and see what there is a need for and offer what you have for talent."



Jackson County HCE President Joan Staffon prepares mask kits for members wanting to get involved with mask-making efforts.

### Volunteers Learn and Grow through Community Projects

"As a volunteer organization, HCE's members want to make a difference through any project that involves our communities," shares Jackson County HCE President Joan Staffon. Jackson County Association for Home and Community Education (HCE) is a non-profit, educational, and charitable organization that offers its members opportunities to grow and learn through monthly meetings and educational lessons/programs.

Throughout the year, the 100 HCE members from eight Jackson County clubs provide a Bookworms reading program; sew or contribute baby bibs and burp cloths, pads for girls in developing countries, pillowcase dresses and boys' shorts for children in Nicaragua and Mexico, book bags for the reading program, baby slings; nursing home visits; presentations for the public on various topics. "Without volunteers, all of these activities would be impossible," says Joan. "Members spend numerous hours and donate much material and needed items to projects."

Joan became a member in 1998, when she was extended an invitation. She became hooked, taking on leadership positions just two years later. "I love a challenge, and the HCE organization has provided that with the many projects we are able to complete and supply to both our county and to international projects," she says.

As HCE president, Joan is responsible for encouraging members to participate in any countywide project the organization is getting involved with. When Joan was asked if the group could join in to sew face masks for nursing homes and



other facilities, she immediately responded with a yes. She set to work right away by sending out a request and the mask pattern to all HCE members. “I cut out and put together about 45 kits, distributing them to be sewn by ladies in the area,” says Joan. “I sewed and delivered 50 masks to the drop-off point in Black River Falls.”

The original goal for the mask making project was to make 200. The number of masks received surpassed this goal, with 500-plus masks being delivered. “I want to give a great big thank you to all members who took up the challenge to sew face masks,” says Joan. “The need continues, and we should continue to supply masks if possible.”

### Curds for Kids Keeps Wisconsin Dairy Strong

We were all sad to hear the news of the cancellation of the 2020 Jackson County Dairy Breakfast, the Jackson County Dairy Promotion Committee’s largest event and promotional opportunity. However, instead of that being the end solution, the committee decided to look at alternative promotional ideas. That’s when the Curds for Kids campaign came into play. While the campaign originated in Trempealeau County, our Jackson County volunteers ran with the idea to support our communities’ youth and farmers. “It’s a two-part goal,” shares committee member Max Hart. “We’re supplying kids with a healthy snack while they’re not in school due to the coronavirus, but we’re also supporting the dairy industry by taking surplus milk off the market.”

Through this campaign, community members were asked to contribute monetary donations toward the purchase of

**Jackson Electric utilized its Federated Youth Foundation (FYF) funds to contribute \$1,500 to the Jackson County Dairy Committee to help promote the Curds for Kids and Dairy at Dinnertime campaigns. FYF funds are collected through unclaimed capital credits and can only be used for educational or charitable causes. Since cooperatives are concerned about the communities they serve, this was a great opportunity for Jackson Electric to acknowledge its agricultural roots while also supporting the families in our communities during an unprecedented time.**



**Bailey Larson and Rozanne Ruzic volunteer to deliver cheese curds to the area schools as part of the Curds for Kids campaign.**

cheese curds for families in the Alma-Center-Humbird-Merrillan, Black River Falls, and Melrose-Mindoro school districts. Volunteers picked up the curds and delivered them to the schools, with the first drop-off held on April 24, providing 1,530 pounds of cheese curds. At the time of this writing, the committee had hoped to continue this project through the end of the school year.

Bailey Larson and her grandma, Rozanne Ruzic, were some of the volunteers who delivered cheese curds to the schools. “Having grown up on a small dairy farm, I have a strong passion for the industry,” shares Bailey. “I enjoyed seeing members of the community come together to have an impact on the lives of so many dairy farmers and students in our community.”

The students receiving the donated cheese curds were also very appreciative of the community’s efforts. “I received many thank-you notes from students thanking dairy farmers of Wisconsin for their hard work and providing nutritious dairy products for their families,” Bailey adds.

One idea often leads to another. After launching Curds for Kids, the Dairy at Dinnertime campaign was launched, providing volunteers with another opportunity to promote dairy products and support the community. Free gallons of milk, along with coupons for future purchases, were provided through a drive-through system hosted at a local hardware, farm and ranch store.

“As a committee, I would like to thank the farmers that continue to provide great quality milk and the businesses that have supported our organization over the years,” says Max. “We are always looking for new volunteers to help with the committee’s events, but we welcome you to support the dairy industry in any way that you are able to,” he concludes.

Mark your calendars: The 2021 Dairy Breakfast is scheduled for June 5.—*Brandi Shramek, Executive Coordinator*

### Now is the time to buy and install a solar system!

26% Federal tax credit available through December 31, 2020.

Contact JacksonSolar LLC to learn how you can use the sun to energize your home.

715.284.5385 800.370.4607





**Support your local dairy farmers!**  
**Buy milk, cheese, butter, yogurt**  
**and all the dairy goodness!**  
 Post your mealtime pictures and  
 use #dairyatdinnertime

## LOAD MANAGEMENT NOTIFICATIONS

We are entering the summer full load control (peak alert) season. Members can be notified by email, text, and/or phone call of a load management event. Please contact the office to request a load management enrollment form or go to [www.jackelec.com/content/dual-fuel-program](http://www.jackelec.com/content/dual-fuel-program) to download a form. This form must be on file at Jackson Electric for you to receive notifications.

Updated contact information is the member's responsibility. If you need to update your information, please submit an updated form to Jackson Electric.

**What is a full load control (peak alert) event?** A full load control event is issued by our power supplier, Dairyland Power, when there's high demand for electricity on the regional grid. Elevated peak demand, between the hours of 2 and 6 p.m., leads to higher power costs during this time. To help keep our rates stable and affordable, we ask our members to use extra electricity conservation efforts when a full load control is issued.

Residential water heaters and cooling systems with a load management receiver will be controlled during a full load control event. Elements in the water heater will not heat during this time, and home cooling systems will cycle on and off every 15 minutes.

Full load control events are also announced on WWIS and WAXX affiliated radio stations, [www.jackelec.com](http://www.jackelec.com), and Jackson Electric's Facebook page.

## Water Heater Warranty Reminders

Jackson Electric sells 50- and 100-gallon water heaters with a manufacturer's warranty to its members. The warranty, to the original owner of the water heater, for each model is as follows:

### 50-gallon Rheem:

- 6-year warranty. If the unit fails within the six-year period, the replacement unit's warranty will be prorated to the warranty date of the original water heater.

### 100/105-gallon Marathon:

- 10 years if the original purchaser did not register the water heater for an extended lifetime warranty.
- 10 years if the home is not owned by the original purchaser of the water heater.
- 10 years if the owner does not have proof of purchase.
- 10 years if the water heater's been moved from its original installation location.
- 10 years if the unit is part of a residential rental property.
- Extended lifetime tank warranty when installed in a single-family dwelling owned by the original purchaser of the water heater with proof of purchase. Water heater needs to be registered online within 90 days of the installation date.
- 5 years if installed in an agricultural and/or commercial application.

If your water heater is under warranty, we will need the serial and model number sticker that is located on your water heater. This is required by the manufacturer to process your warranty claim.

Jackson Electric no longer sells 105-gallon MHD model water heaters. However, we do sell 100-gallon MRG model water heaters. These models are grid-enabled and require a load management receiver to be installed and operational per government requirements.

### Water Heater Repair Reminders

Water heaters with an active Jackson Electric load management receiver, regardless of the warranty expiration date, qualify for free parts and labor during the hours of 8 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday–Friday. Repairs done after these hours, weekends, and on cooperative-recognized holidays are charged a \$150 service fee.

Please do not wait until the end of the regular workday to contact the office if your water heater is not operating properly. We make every effort to repair your water heater on the same day, but if you wait until the end of the day, you may be charged an after-hours service fee.

If the repair is plumbing or electrical related, or due to a dry-fired element, parts and labor will be charged to the member. Repair charges due to poor water quality will be the responsibility of the owner.

Water heaters picked up after hours, weekends, and cooperative-recognized holidays will be charged an additional \$150.

Fees are subject to change without notice.

## PURCHASE AN ENERGY STAR DEHUMIDIFIER

It's springtime, and chances are there is some level of humidity lurking in your home. The purchase of an Energy Star dehumidifier has its perks, but be aware of its operating costs.

Dehumidifiers that operate continuously in an area where it's very humid consume a considerable amount of energy. The size of the unit will affect the operating costs. A monthly increase of \$20 to \$50 in energy costs is not unusual. Dehumidifiers have a compressor similar to a refrigerator. Therefore, operating a dehumidifier uses energy similar to leaving the refrigerator door open.

Look for the Energy Star logo when purchasing a dehumidifier. According to the Energy Star website, Energy Star certified models have more efficient refrigeration coils, compressors, and fans than conventional models. This means they use less energy to remove moisture.

Energy Star rated dehumidifiers qualify for a \$25 rebate from Jackson Electric. Rebate forms are available at [www.jackelec.com](http://www.jackelec.com) or from our office.



### Rebates Available

Jackson Electric has rebates available for the purchase and installation of Energy Star appliances, electric heat pumps, and LED lighting. Go to [www.jackelec.com](http://www.jackelec.com) or contact our office for more information.

### Member Picnic Canceled

Due to the health and safety concerns surrounding the spread of COVID-19, Jackson Electric's annual member picnic scheduled for August 19 is canceled. We look forward to seeing all our members at the 2021 picnic.



# UNPLANNED OUTAGES HAPPEN

Spring storm season is upon us, and Jackson Electric appreciates your cooperation as we work together to restore power after a strong storm or other large-scale outage event. Please understand that our line crew is called out to restore power during some of the most severe weather conditions, often working long hours in extreme conditions.

**Jackson Electric's  
Outage Reporting Number:  
855.222.3275**

Jackson Electric's line crew work around 7,200 and greater volts of electricity in all kinds of weather conditions. Ignoring safety protocol to restore outages faster can be fatal. Be assured that our line crew is working as quickly and safely as they can to restore power to the largest number of members. When a powerful storm rolls through a portion or the entire service territory, our line crew may have to remove fallen trees, replace broken poles and damaged transformers, and possibly string new conductor.

## How is Power Restored?

1. After the outage has been dispatched and our crew arrives on site, they determine the extent of the damage and pinpoint the source of the outage.

**Staying Safe Until Power is Restored** [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)

How long it takes to get your power restored depends on:

- the extent of the storm's destruction
- the number of outages #?
- when it becomes safe for utility personnel to get to the damaged areas

Stay safe until we can restore power to you.

- Power is restored to as much of the undamaged system as possible. If a substation is out of service, resolving that issue and/or rerouting power from another substation takes priority. Restoration of power to those members on a three-phase line typically takes priority, as well. If you see that your neighbor's lights are on, and your power is still out, it may be that you are on a different feeder line, phase, or circuit.
- If possible, our line crew will reroute the electricity to temporarily restore power for our members. If not, the crew will need to repair and/or rebuild poles and conductor. This takes time, labor, and equipment.

## BE PREPARED FOR UNPLANNED POWER OUTAGES

Living in Wisconsin, we all know that the weather changes as often as we change our clothes. One day it's blue skies, fluffy white clouds, and a light breeze. The next it's hot, humid, and the forecast says the conditions are perfect for thunderstorms. The storm rolls around, and the power goes out. You wonder how widespread the outage is and how long it will last, thinking of the food in your refrigerator and freezer.

Skip to November. It's a bitter, windy day with freezing rain. The turkey is in the oven, and your Thanksgiving company will be arriving soon. The combination of conditions knocks out the power. You hope the outage won't last more

than a few hours.

These scenarios are conditions that can and have happened in our service territory. Unplanned power outages are unpredictable. They can occur during the most severe weather conditions, at the most inconvenient time.

That's where having a generator can ease your worries, giving some peace of mind during an otherwise uncertain circumstance. Investing in an automatic standby generator will give you that peace of mind knowing that you'll have power when the electricity goes out. These generators deliver power directly to your home's electrical system, backing up your entire home or just the most



essential items, and they run on natural gas or LP.

Can you imagine your life without electricity? Refrigeration? Heating/cooling? Electronic communication devices? If not, now is the time to research whether an automatic standby generator may be right for you. We can't always predict when a power outage will occur, but we can be prepared for when they do.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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



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