



More Power to You OLD MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE LEADS TO NOSTALGIC JOURNEY

Shane L. Larson, Chief Executive Officer

The family of Meinardus Schenkel recently found a bit of history while going through a box of old papers.

Rick and Kay Butke of Delavan immediately recognized the historical significance of the Rock County Electric Cooperative Association Membership Certificate that was dated March 17, 1938. Rick's grandfather, Meinardus, and his family came by boat from the Netherlands in 1927 and farmed in Johnstown Township. Their farm was among the first to receive electricity from the co-op in 1937.

Long ago, people who wanted electrical service would receive a membership certificate that would explain their rights in the association. It was signed by the co-op president and

secretary and affixed with the official cooperative seal.

The certificate issued to the Schenkel family was signed by G.S. Rice, co-op president at the time, and J.B. Dybevik, then-secretary. Both were among the 14 farmers who signed the original articles of incorporation when the co-op was formed in 1936.

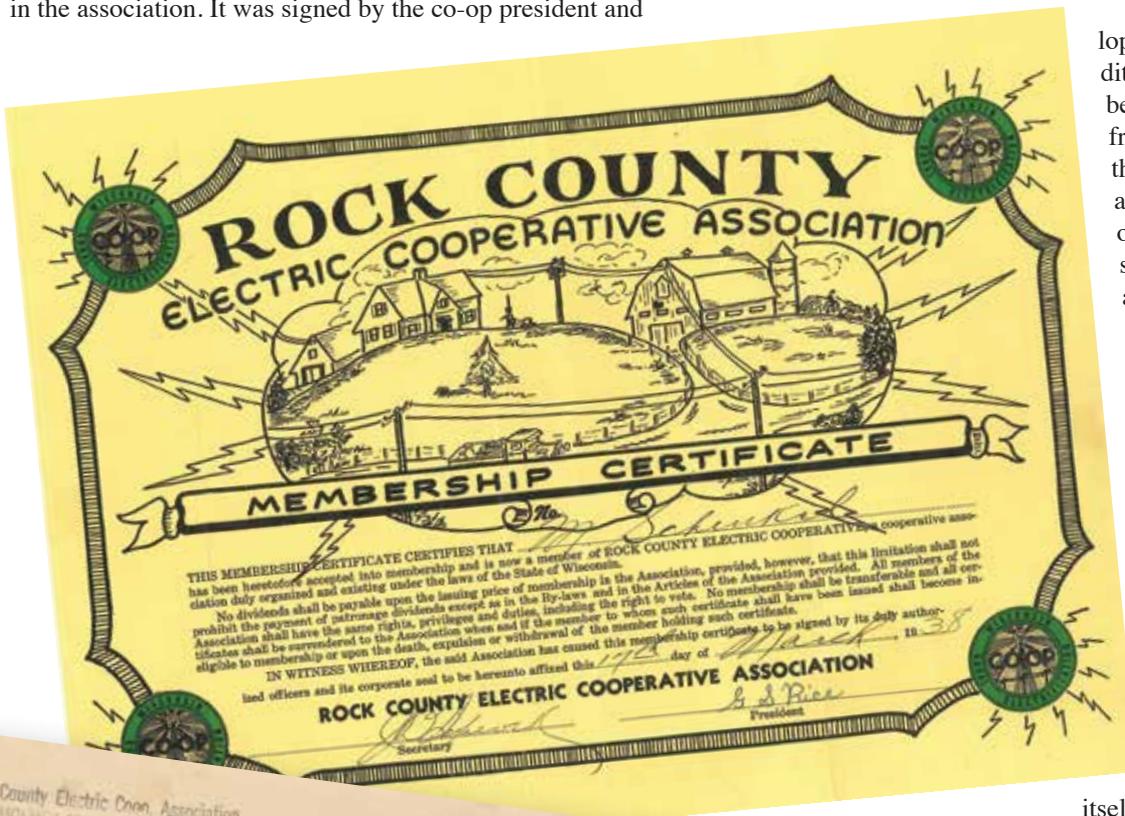
When Meinardus died in 1949, his son Hendrik operated the farm until he decided to leave farming. The membership certificate and other old documents, including receipts for wagons and other farm equipment, were put in a box, packed away, and forgotten.

The document and envelope are in such good condition that they must have been stored safely away from the elements for all those years. Anyone who is a history buff—or just likes old things—will notice some interesting things about the certificate.

I imagine the printing world in the 1930s was mostly black and white, so I was surprised that the certificate was on yellow paper and even had a few touches of green on the Wisconsin rural electrification logo. In addition, one side of the certificate is perforated so it could easily be torn from a pad.

The envelope itself has plenty of history and would have many young people scratching their heads wondering how mail ever got to its destination. For example, look at the address: M. Schenkel, Route #1, Janesville, Wis. There's no fire number or road name that specifies where it should be delivered, just a person's name and route number. It's obvious that rural mail carriers

(Continued on page 18)





Co-op Trucks on Parade in Rockton!

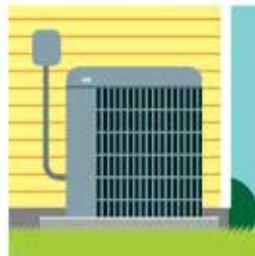
Rock Energy Cooperative employees and their families joined Rockton's annual Christmas Walk parade on Saturday, Dec. 2. Employees participating included Cal Calkins, measurement and controls technician; Bill Wright, journeyman lineman; Jack Slaback, line foreman;

Bud Booth, manager of engineering applications; and Shane Larson, chief executive officer. Ian Isely, who represented the co-op on last year's Youth Tour, also was in the parade.



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Trip to Washington teaches teens about co-ops, politics

Ian Isely and Brett Jones both said the 2017 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., was one of the best weeks of their lives.

“The week in D.C. was one of the best weeks of my life, and the friends I made I intend to keep in contact with for years to come,” said Jones, who attends Hononegah High School in Rockton. *“It was a fantastic experience, and if I had the chance to do it again, I wouldn’t give it a second thought.”*



Ian Isely, left, and Brett Jones represented Rock Energy Cooperative on the 2017 Youth Tour.

“The week that this trip spanned was one of the best weeks of my life because every day we were doing and learning something new, and the chaperones and everyone were fantastic,” said Isely, a South Beloit High School student. “And at the end we were like all one big family.”

Isely and Jones became members of the Youth Tour alumni family when they represented Rock Energy Cooperative on the June trip to the nation’s capital. They were among 69 youth leaders from Illinois who traveled by bus to Washington, D.C. Once there, they visited national landmarks with more than 1,730 young leaders from across the country, returning with a greater appreciation of the political process and a better understanding of cooperative business principles.

The students met with elected officials at the Capitol, and they visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, presidential memorials, the National Archives, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Newseum, and several other historical sites.

The students said they now have an increased awareness of cooperatives, learning that energy co-ops benefit rural areas.

“I learned that cooperatives are very beneficial to rural areas because they mitigate cost for the individual rather than electric companies monopolizing energy costs,” Jones said.

Isely said he learned that energy cooperatives are important because they provide power to people who live in rural locations and give money back to members if there is excess revenue.

Both students said the trip increased their interest in government and politics.

“Learning about the political process from Senator Dick Durbin and other members of Congress made the topic very interesting in that it’s a lot more difficult and complicated than

what I thought it would be,” Isely said. “Listening to them really just made me more aware of what their job really means and how my say affects what happens on Capitol Hill.”

Jones said it was a great experience to meet congressional representatives and he plans to study government in college.

The students encouraged current high school juniors to consider applying for the 2018 Youth Tour.

“I have a strong feeling that if I were not to have gone on this trip that I would’ve been the lesser for it because when I got back I confirmed by major (computer engineering) and really started to take things seriously,” Isely said.

Jones said he met so many great people on the trip, all with similar interests. “We all become so close and are all in contact,” he added. “We met up once after the trip and are planning to get together again soon.”

How to apply for 2018 trip

Rock Energy Cooperative will fully sponsor two high school juniors to participate in the 2018 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., which will take place June 8–15.

Applicants must be children of Rock Energy members and reside in the co-op’s service territory. The all-expense-paid trip includes transportation, lodging, meals, and admissions to events. Round-trip travel is by motor coach from Springfield, Ill. Travel to Springfield is not included.

Online applications are available at www.rock.coop. Just go to the Community & Youth tab and click on Youth Tour. The deadline for submitting applications is Feb. 28. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Uebelacker at 866-752-4550 or barbu@rock.coop.





More Power to You (Continued from page 15)

at the time didn't have an easy job.

Today's addresses have house or fire numbers, road names, two-letter state postal codes, and zip codes—which started at five digits but have grown to nine.

You can tell that a manual typewriter was used because the "R" in Route is askew. The typist apparently struggled to hold down the shift key.

But perhaps the most noticeable change is the cost of postage—just 3 cents compared to today's 46 cents. "Forever" stamps would have been a big hit in the 1930s. Imagine buying a lifetime's supply of stamps for just 3 cents each.

All in all, the membership certificate was a great find. Thanks to the Butkes, a piece of co-op history can now be displayed in our office. We enjoy seeing co-op memorabilia, so think of us if you find anything that might be of interest to your fellow members.

As we head into 2018, the co-op's 82nd year, we look forward to continuing to provide you with safe and reliable energy at an affordable cost. If there's anything we can do to improve our service, please don't hesitate to let us know.



Last Chance...

Jan. 3 is the deadline to apply for Rock Energy Cooperative scholarships for 2018. For details, go to www.rock.coop or call 866-752-4550.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Looking for an easy way to make your home cozier? Try using an area rug to increase the insulation levels of your floors. Area rugs are stylish and can keep cool air from entering through your floors. Your toes will thank you!



VISIT WEBSITE BEFORE INSTALLING SOLAR

If you're thinking about installing a solar generation system on your property, make sure to learn all the facts before signing a contract.

To get started, go to www.rock.coop/content/distributed-generation. There you will find a list of frequently asked questions, guidelines for technical requirements, our interconnection agreement, and details about our Small Distributed Generation Rate. This information can be provided to potential vendors so they are aware of the cooperative's technical requirements.

If you have any questions after reviewing the information, please call us at 866-752-4550 or email questions@rock.coop.



ROCK ENERGY'S

offices will be closed Friday, Dec. 29, and Monday, Jan. 1, in observance of New Year's Day.

To report an outage, please call 866-752-4550.

Shane Larson, CEO

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Barbara Uebelacker, Editor



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