



News FOR YOU...

April 2014

“Barron Electric Cooperative is a member-owned business that provides energy, products, and services to improve the quality of life in the area we serve.”

Barron Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Dream Grows into Reality at Vermillion Produce

Over 900 tomato plants of different varieties are growing at Vermillion Produce, as well as cucumbers. Tomatoes include cherry, cocktail, and beefsteak. Owner Cameron Goertzen said, “My business started as table-talk. After visiting several operations, I purchased a used greenhouse in the spring of 2010. In the spring of 2011, we had our first crop.” In 2012, Cameron sold their cows and decided to build an even bigger greenhouse.

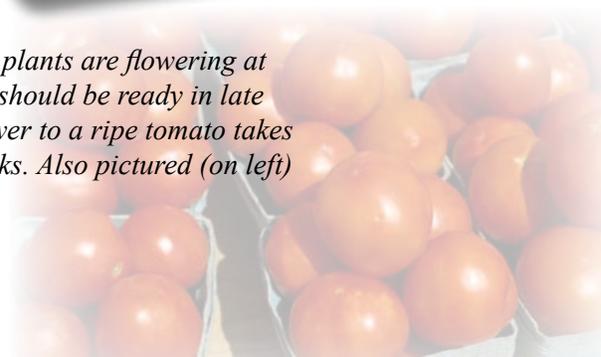
Cameron commented, “We can control the flavor of our produce in the greenhouse.” He added, “The challenge is producing a wow tomato. This is based on picking at the right time and monitoring the fertilizer and the environment daily.” They purchase nutrients that are tailored for their business. In the summer, plants are irrigated 18-20 times per day and over drain is collected and measured for quality. Bumblebees are purchased to help with pollination. The tall ceiling of the greenhouse captures more light.

Cameron’s love for growing started as a child in Kansas, where he grew watermelon and sweet corn on his parent’s farm. He lived in Brazil for several years, where he enjoyed a year-round garden. The entire family helps with the operation. He remarked, “You go into something with a dream; and once in, you can’t go back, so you keep plowing ahead.”

Cameron plans to have tomatoes ready by the end of April. Local grocery stores will carry their product, watch for the Vermillion Produce label. Vermillion Produce is located at 1399 13th Street, west of Barron and north on Highway T. They can be reached at 715-296-5015 or vermillionproduce@yahoo.com.



Pictured above: Tomato plants are flowering at Vermillion Produce and should be ready in late April. From an open flower to a ripe tomato takes approximately eight weeks. Also pictured (on left) are cucumber plants.



Members Find “Get to Know Your Cooperative” Events Informational

More than 100 members and guests attended the “Get to Know Your Cooperative” events. Selmer Nelson, Barron Electric’s Board President, said, “We are interested in your feedback to help improve our service to you.” Some of the topics discussed at these events included Right-of-Way Clearing, Community Solar, SmartHub, dual fuel heating, and the Connections Card.

Right-of-Way Clearing

Barron Electric’s Right-of-Way Clearing Program helps reduce blinks

and outages. Barron Electric hires contractors to clear trees and brush in sixty-one townships on a rotational schedule of every 5 years for Barron County and every 6 years in Washburn County. Contractors will clear 13 townships this year.

Community Solar

Barron Electric is evaluating a Community Solar Project, which would give members the option to purchase a panel of the solar array. Participants would receive a monthly credit for the power that is produced.

SmartHub

Members can view daily and monthly meter usage at SmartHub and compare it to average temperatures. Members can get started by visiting barronelectric.com and clicking on the SmartHub icon. You will need your Barron Electric account number to create an account. Members can make payments in a secure environment and contact our office.

Go Paperless

When signing up for SmartHub, click yes to turn off paper bills and then submit. Members who are already signed up with SmartHub can choose My Profile and Update My Printed Bill Settings to turn off printed bills.

Dual Fuel Heating

Barron Electric’s off-peak heating program offers a lower rate when heating with electric and an automatic back-up heating system. Some examples of dual fuel include:

- Baseboard heat with a gas/oil furnace back-up
- Electric hydronic heating with a gas/oil furnace back-up
- Electric plenum heater with a gas/oil furnace back-up
- Electric hydronic boiler with a thermostatically controlled gas fireplace.

Dual Fuel requires an automatic back-up heating system that is adequate to maintain comfortable room temperatures. Power to the Dual Fuel system may be turned off for 12 hours in a 24-hour period during peak demand situations. Conditions apply.

Connections Card

Barron Electric Cooperative members have saved nearly \$17,000 on prescriptions. Visit connections.coop to save money on local and national deals,



as well as coupons and the cash back mall, which includes savings at over 5,000 online merchants.

Start saving at connections.coop



Mandy Straw (right), Supervisor of Accounting, answers questions from Members Elinor and James Selle.

Growing “Green” Energy

Barron Electric’s wholesale power supplier, Dairyland Power Cooperative, has demonstrated its commitment to renewable energy generation for many years. By generating and purchasing renewable energy for its 25 member cooperatives, Dairyland can help meet electrical demand and maintain our collective commitment to protecting the environment. The challenge for Dairyland is to achieve renewable energy goals and requirements while balancing cost and reliability concerns. About 12.5 percent of Dairyland’s power supply is derived from renewable sources including hydro, wind, biomass, landfill gas, solar and animal waste-to-energy. Dairyland recently added a commercial solar project, which could produce enough energy to power nearly 60 homes. The solar facility located in Westby, Wisconsin should be operational by June 2014.

Evergreen

Evergreen is a voluntary “green power” program and ideal for those who want to do more to preserve the environment and support renewable energy generation. The cost of the program is \$1.50 per month, with a one-year commitment. Please visit our website at barronelectric.com or e-mail memberservices@barronelectric.com with any questions.



Theresa Kamrath Wins Megawatt Community Service Award



Meet Theresa Kamrath, Barron Electric's Megawatt Community Service Award winner. Katie Roux said, "Theresa truly is the epitome of community service. She is an amazing selfless individual which is why I am nominating her for this award."

Theresa is the founder of The Hope Squad of Rice Lake. This organization was originally started four years ago as a way to create suicide awareness and try to help prevent it by offering hope to those in need. Today, The Hope Squad offers services to anyone in need including helping cover the cost of heating bills, helping someone move, giving rides to those without a car, or giving food to help feed a family. Katie remarked, "Theresa is constantly helping those who call at all hours of the day and night." Theresa said, "My brother-in-law was my inspiration for Hope Squad; he had

committed suicide several years ago. This organization allows me to reach out and help others." Over 400 people visit Hope Squad annually, while they assist over 700 people over the phone. They use the 211 resource which offers free and confidential help for food, housing, employment, health care, and counseling. Theresa can be reached at 715-790-8901 or tkamrath5@hotmail.com.

Win \$50

Barron Electric is rewarding members and their families for community service by awarding a \$50 electric bill credit to the winners of the Megawatt

Theresa Kamrath founded The Hope Squad to help those in need.

Community Service Award on a monthly basis.

Nominate a member by completing the application form, available at barronelectric.com in the community area or by contacting the Member Services Department at 800-322-1008.



Energy Questions and Answers

The following are some answers to commonly asked questions about home energy use.

Should I leave the lights on when leaving a room for a short period?

The cost effectiveness of turning lights on and off depends on the type of bulb. Incandescent bulbs are very inefficient and should be turned off whenever they are not needed. Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) are highly efficient and their operating life is affected by the number of times they are switched on and off. Leave CFLs on if you will be out of a room for 15 minutes or less.

What is the best thermostat setting for saving energy and remaining comfortable?

In winter, the U.S. Department of Energy recommends a temperature setting of 68 degrees when you are at home and a lower setting at night or when you are away. In summer, set the thermostat at 78 degrees to stay comfortable when you are at home, and raise it to 85 degrees to save energy when your home is unoccupied.

Will closing vents help lower my heating and cooling costs?

Typically, closing or covering up vents is not a good way to save on energy costs. Heating and cooling systems are balanced throughout the duct system; closing vents throws the system off balance. Pressure can build up in the ductwork, causing leakage and reducing the amount of air circulating in your home. This reduces system efficiency and comfort.

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Director Notes



Lynn Peterson represents District 6 on Barron Electric's Board of Directors which includes the townships of Clinton, Barron, Maple Grove, and Prairie Lake.

Condensed Board Minutes January 29, 2014

- Director Helm gave the treasurer's report, with comments by Manager Sloan. A report of vouchers for the month was printed as part of the board packet as follows: #85800 thru #86014 on First National Bank of Barron was in the amount of \$351,597; capital credit estate checks of \$10,169 and capital credit retirement checks of \$12,079. Director Helm reported on activity of total receipts in the office - \$3,836,880; total receipts by wire, ACH, credit cards - \$1,133,228; disbursements by ACH, EFT, wire - \$4,082,641; transfer of funds was made for payroll - \$234,164; power bill due 01/29/14 - \$2,167,540. A membership list was presented for review and approved.
- Director Peterson reported on the Dairyland meeting he attended on January 17, 2014. Several directors attended Board Leadership courses on January 20, 2014 and January 21, 2014.
- Outages year-to-date stand at 97,330 consumer hours off, which is 61.7% above 2012 hours of 37,306. Overtime year-to-date is 3,735.75 hours, which is 6.1% above 2012 hours of 3,508.

News FOR YOU...

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Published for the members of Barron Electric.
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the newsletter, please e-mail
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Helping Boy Scouts of America



Customer Service Representative Julie Anderson presents a \$500 check to Brian Halloran, who represents Northern Star Council, Boy Scouts of America. Funds for donations are derived from the Federated Youth Foundation, an administrative trust overseeing unclaimed capital credits of former members.

Cook's Corner

Lime Chiffon Dessert Mary Yoder

Crust:

- 1 1/2 cups crushed graham crackers (24 squares)
- 3 Tbsp sugar
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine

Combine ingredients. Set aside 2 tablespoons for topping. Press remaining crumbs on bottom of an ungreased 9"x13" pan. Set aside.

Filling:

- 1 (3 oz.) package lime gelatin
- 1 cup boiling water
- 11 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup sugar (or a little less)
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 (16 oz.) carton whipped topping, thawed

In a bowl, dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Cool. In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar. Add vanilla. Mix well. Slowly add gelatin until mixed. Fold in whipped topping and spoon over crust. Sprinkle with reserved crumbs. Cover and refrigerate 3 hours, or freeze and serve frozen.

Each recipe winner will receive a Farm Technology Days cookbook. Please e-mail your recipe to barronec@barronelectric.com or send your recipes to:
Barron Electric Cooperative, PO Box 40, Barron WI 54812, Attn: Carrie