



William Schmidt  
General Manager

## JREC BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVED 2017 BUDGET

The Jump River Electric Cooperative (JREC) board of directors, management staff, and employees are looking forward to 2017 with great optimism. The board of directors recently approved the JREC 2017 budget, which will enable management and employees to achieve break-through results.

The single largest 2017 budget expense item is power purchased from Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), as it accounts for nearly 54 percent of our budgeted expenditures. In December 2016, DPC announced that there would be no rate increase effective May 1, 2017. That is good news for our members; however, there are always risks associated with budget assumptions. Will low market prices remain? Will interest rates continue to be favorable? Will DPC's generation fleet and transmission system perform as reliably as in the past? The budget includes amounts allocated to our commitment to continuous electric infrastructure construction to improve our system reliability and safety (including pole testing, line and service inspection, right-of-way maintenance, line crew equipment, and construction). The budget includes amounts allocated to our technology plan of transitioning to the RF Gridstream/Automated Meter Infrastructure System (AMI). We plan to complete the system installation in the Ladysmith service territory in 2017, and begin our installation into the Hayward service territory.

The 2017 JREC budget includes allocations to sustain and improve member satisfaction and engagement with the use of improved communications, including an updated website, personalized payment options, community involvement, and many other tools available. In fact, it is reasonable to conclude that every budgeted amount is intended to promote greater member satisfaction and engagement (and achieve the JREC board of director goals).

### JREC Board of Director Goals

- Financial – Maintain financial strength of the cooperative and provide competitive rates
- Employee – Ensure that the cooperative attracts, retains, and develops employees to maintain an efficient, safe, quality workforce and promote a culture of safety and service
- Member – Engage cooperative stakeholders to improve member satisfaction
- Reliability – Improve the electric infrastructure to ensure system reliability

The board of directors' goals are JREC's goals. The status of the goals will be reported to the board through board reports, and management staff meetings will be organized around them. These goals and the status of the goals must be communicated to the employees on a regular basis.



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### More Good News!

#### NWPA Round 2 Lawsuit Proceeds

In February 2017, JREC was notified by DPC that the cooperative is scheduled to receive its proportionate share of the NWPA Lawsuit Round 2 proceeds from DPC as a settlement was reached with the federal government. JREC will receive \$1,092,042.79, which represents 2.29 percent of the total proceeds received by DPC for the years ended 2007–2012. The amount was calculated based on JREC's proportionate contribution to DPC's net margins for those years mentioned.

As in the past, the JREC board of directors will decide on how the proceeds will be applied and recorded in accordance with its lender's regulatory and accounting requirements.

The JREC board of directors are committed to maintaining affordable electric rates for its members.

### Conrath Solar Project

As we have previously reported in the magazine, in 2016, DPC announced its plans to construct a total of 15 utility-scale solar installations, 14 of which are in Wisconsin and one in Iowa. Together, they will yield close to 21 MW of renewable energy, more than doubling the current capacity in Wisconsin. As a cooperative initiative, the facilities are being built in the service areas of DPC's member electric cooperatives

### District 6 Director Appointed

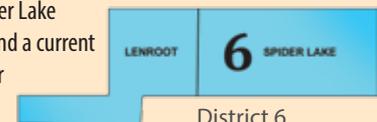


The board of directors appointed John Cerman as the new District 6 director at the January 31, 2017, board meeting. Most of John's early years were spent in DesPlaines, Illinois, and then in Arlington Heights, Illinois. John built his home in 1980 and became a member of the cooperative at that time. He moved up to Hayward and became a permanent resident 11 years ago.

John is a graduate of Northern Illinois University, where he earned a bachelor of science degree, majoring in biology and minoring in chemistry, and a master of science degree in education and biological sciences.

Some of John's past professional experience includes working as a high school biology teacher, elementary school district administrator, and president of Educational Aids Incorporated. The latter is a group of three retail teacher supply stores and a national catalog sales and distribution subsidiary John founded and managed. John also oversaw the publishing of a line of supplemental education books when he was the president of Teaching Ink, Inc.

More recently, John was chosen adjunct LCO College Instructor of the Year in 2012 and is currently certified for Board of Review. John is also an active member of the Spider Lake Planning and Review board and a current member of the Town of Spider Lake Board of Supervisors.



District 6



## 2017 Budget (Continued from page 1)

(including JREC). The advantages of multiple projects in separate areas include: diversified weather, distributed grid infrastructure impacts, and locally based renewable energy. All are expected to be operational by summer 2017.

Construction completed on the Conrath project includes installing the piles, and completing the undergrounding and trenching. Still needing to be completed includes installing racking, modules, DC wiring, and AC feeders. The mechanical installation is scheduled to be completed by the end of April 2017, with the unit being operational by June 30, 2017. Stay tuned as we will report important updates to the project, especially when it comes online.

### District 9 – Director Vacancy

Board president Ed Wollwert recently tendered his resignation from the board of directors, which resulted in the cooperative canceling the special meeting of the membership that was scheduled for Saturday, January 28. Because of this resignation, the board will be taking applications until March 10, 2017, for the position of director for District 9. District 9 is comprised of Round Lake Township in Sawyer County. Letters regarding this matter were mailed to each member within this district in early February.

If you are interested in applying for this director position, please send your resumé and letter of application to my attention and mail to Jump River Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 99, Ladysmith WI 54848. For a complete listing of qualifications, please refer to Article IV, Section 3 of the cooperative bylaws. You can find more information and a copy of the bylaws online at [www.jrec.com](http://www.jrec.com), or call me at 715-532-5524.

## TAX-EXEMPTION FORMS

If you or your business qualify for tax exemption, a Wisconsin Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate needs to be on file at our office for the sales tax to be exempt from your electric account. You can download the form at [www.jrec.com](http://www.jrec.com) by clicking on the New Member Information link at the top of the home page.

## OVER \$10,000 IN JREC SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE IN 2017



Jump River Electric Cooperative will be offering a variety of scholarships to its active members or their dependent children. These scholarships are as follows:

**Get ready 2017 high school graduates, JREC will be awarding 22 \$400 scholarships to area students.** The dollar amount of this scholarship was recently increased by the board of directors. The \$400 JREC Scholarships are available to local graduating seniors whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are active members of JREC and are currently attending one of the following high schools: Bruce, Flambeau, Gilman, Hayward, Ladysmith, Lake Holcombe, LCO, Rib Lake, Stanley-Boyd, Chetek-Weyerhaeuser, and Winter. Two scholarships will be awarded per school. Contact your school's guidance counselor for a scholarship application.

### \$500 JREC-John Hirschfeld Jr. Memorial Lineworker Scholarship

Members wishing to enter a one-year Electric Power Distribution/Line-worker post-secondary school program can apply for this scholarship. This includes local graduating seniors whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are active members attending one of the 11 schools outlined above, or at-large (non-traditional) active members.

**\$500 JREC-Allen Beadles Memorial Scholarships** will be awarded to two at-large (non-traditional) active members who are continuing their post-secondary education.

**\$500 JREC-Charles Kagigebi Memorial Scholarship** will also be available to one at-large (non-traditional) active member attending the LCO Community College.

A non-traditional student is defined as a parent(s) of a dependent student or self that is an active member of JREC and has received his/her GED or high school diploma for a minimum of one year prior to applying for the scholarship.

Monies for these scholarships come from the Federated Youth Foundation, which is funded through unclaimed capital credits. Deadlines vary by school and application type. Applications can be picked up from the schools' guidance counselor, where applicable, or online at [www.jrec.com](http://www.jrec.com).

### Additional Scholarship Opportunity – Charles Van Sickle Scholarship

The Federated Youth Foundation (FYF) is taking applications for the second Charles Van Sickle Scholarship, to be awarded prior to the fall 2017 semester. Eligibility is limited to pre-law or law students who are Wisconsin residents and have an interest in cooperative law. To be considered, applications must be received at the FYF office no later than June 1, 2017.

The \$2000 scholarship is made possible by an endowment established in 2013 to honor Wisconsin's renowned electric cooperative lobbyist and attorney, the late Charles Van Sickle. Details and application materials can be obtained by contacting Ethan Giebel at 608-258-4405 or by email at [ethan.giebel@cooperativenetwork.coop](mailto:ethan.giebel@cooperativenetwork.coop).

# CUTTING-EDGE CRAFT

JREC knifemaker blends function and art

**P**hil Toberman has one of the sharpest hobbies around. The Prairie du Chien native and JREC member makes one-of-a-kind knives—everything from hunting knives to filet knives, skinning knives, and bowie knives—that are works of art as well as fully functional tools.

In fact, they're more than just functional. Crafted painstakingly by hand, the knives are so durable that Toberman said they're likely to outlast their owners. However, it's their unique appearance that really sets them apart.

Toberman makes the entire knife himself—blade, sheath, and handle. He sews the sheaths out of scrap leather that he buys from a saddle maker in South Dakota, and he creates the handles out of antlers from wild game, some of which he hunted himself or that a customer hunted. He fashions the blades from either stainless steel or unusual repurposed pieces such as sawmill blades or railroad spikes, depending on the

knife. The result is a knife that's as unique as the materials it's made from.

"Every knife is different," Toberman pointed out. "You'll never find two the same."

Even Toberman doesn't fully know what the end result will be when he begins making a knife.

He starts with the blade,

**"My claim to fame is that I made a knife for John Quincy Adams III."**

**Phil Toberman**

which sets the tone for the rest of the tool. If it's a custom-made knife, the owner's personal characteristics and needs are also taken into account.

"The handle is quite a selection. The handle has to fit the blade," Toberman explained. "For example, you can't put a small handle on a big blade. It has to be long enough. And then it has to have a curl to it. Is the person you're making the knife for right-handed or left-handed? Because if the handle curls toward the body, then it's harder to get hold of."

**A Rendezvous with Friends** – Toberman's been making knives for about 25 years. His craft is an offshoot of another hobby he's passionate about—participating in fur-trading and trapping re-enactments.

"I got interested in rendezvous because I like that lifestyle," Toberman explained. "And I figured we all need to learn to do some of those things—to be self-reliant. We all need to learn those skills."

Toberman partners with friend and fellow outdoorsman Dick Tesar to participate in area rendezvous events; the two usually participate in two or three a year. It was Tesar who taught Toberman how to make knives using different steel sources for blades and deer or elk antlers for handles.

Another friend, Doc LaMoureaux of Hawkins, taught



Phil Toberman, wearing a deerskin jacket that he made, displays some of the unique knives he makes using mostly antlers as handles.

Toberman more knifemaking techniques, including LaMoureaux's signature "stacked knife" style, with layers of leather, wood, and bone built into the handle. LaMoureaux also taught Toberman a lot about working with leather.

"The leatherwork is my favorite part," Toberman said. Each sheath is as unique as the knife it's made for; Toberman applies snaps and handles where appropriate to the knife and often applies a tooling stamp design, usually of animals, onto the face of the sheath.

Toberman's leatherwork skills extend beyond knife sheaths. He also makes the full deerskin outfits that he wears at rendezvous, sewing them by hand with sinew and sometimes applying buttons made of bone and beadwork that he trades for with other rendezvous participants. Like his knives, Toberman's deerskin clothing is durable and fully functional.

"I wear the deerskin pants hunting," he said. "They're really good in the briars and weeds because nothing clings to them, so you can walk through the brush and come back without your clothes being all full of the weeds and stickers."

**Historical Encounter** – Toberman typically makes about 30 knives a year, with two or three in various stages of production at any given time. He gives away as many as he sells. He donates three knives a year to the Rusk County Wildlife Association and frequently contributes to turkey banquets and other outdoor organization events in southwest Wisconsin (he is also a member of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative). ▶



He and Tesar sell knives at the rendezvous they attend, and Toberman also sells directly to individual customers year-round. Most of these customers have seen or heard of his work and have specific requests, either for a certain type of knife, maybe with a handle from their own trophy buck, and possibly with their name inscribed on the handle. Toberman has sold knives all over the country—including Florida, Texas, New York, and Hawaii—and even in Canada.

“My claim to fame is that I made a knife for John Quincy Adams III,” he said. “I was going to Alaska and I met him on the Amtrack train. I overheard him talking to someone else so I introduced myself and we got to talking. I told him about my knives. He doesn’t hunt, but he asked me to make a knife for his brother, Don, who hunts.”

Toberman said he and Adams, a descendent of the fourth president of the United States, were at the point of discussing sale logistics when Toberman offered to make the knife, with Don Adams’ name inscribed on the handle, and then send it to Adams. If he liked it, he could send a check. If not, he could just send the knife back. The two agreed to these trusting

terms. Toberman made the knife, sent it to John Quincy III, who promptly sent a check. Toberman still has the note Adams scrawled with the check, stating that “Don loves the knife!”

That was Toberman’s most memorable sale, but he’s had other memorable experiences. He pointed to a knife made with Damascus steel for the blade and the tusk of a wart hog for the handle as probably his most unusual knife. He shot the wart hog himself on a 2013 hunting trip to South Africa.

**Hobby vs. Work** – Although he’s had a wide range of customers from across the country and beyond—some of them loyal customers who seek out his work at the various events he donates to—Toberman has never actively sought to expand his market. A retired 3M supervisor, Toberman engages in knifemaking and rendezvous activities simply because he enjoys them.

“I don’t advertise or anything like that because it’s just a hobby,” he said of his knifemaking. “Right now it’s fun for me. If it becomes a job, then it becomes work.”—*Mary Erickson*

Contact Phil Toberman at 608-326-2317 or [pjtobe@centurylink.net](mailto:pjtobe@centurylink.net).



1. Phil Toberman made this knife stand out of antlers. 2. The knife at right started out as an old railroad spike, like the one at left. 3. This knife was made with the stacked knife method Toberman learned from Doc LaMoureaux. It also has Toberman’s signature “P” mark that he puts on each piece of his work. 4. Toberman will personalize knife handles with the owner’s name. 5. This knife’s handle is a tusk from a wart hog Toberman shot in South Africa. The blade is Damascus steel. 6. This letter opener was made with a brass bolt.

## William Schmidt, General Manager

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