

Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Northwestern REC

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Amy Wellington, Editor

From the President & CEO



Prioritize safety year round

By Bill Buchanan, *President & CEO*

AT Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), we recognize Electrical Safety Month every May, but we also know the importance of practicing safety year-round. From our co-op crews to you, the members we serve, we recognize that everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity, and it powers our daily lives. But we know firsthand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it 365 days a year.

To me, safety is more than a catchphrase. As president and CEO, it's my responsibility to keep co-op employees safe. Additionally, we want to help keep you and all members of our community safe. That's why you'll see Northwestern REC hosting safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year to illustrate the dangers of electricity. We discuss emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life. Given the prevalence of electrical devices, tools and appliances, I'd like to pass along a few practical safety tips:

- ▶ Have a qualified electrician check for hazards if you notice the following: dimming lights,

a sizzling or buzzing sound, the smell of warm plastic, a switch plate that feels warm or looks scorched, sparks when plugging in or unplugging items, or circuits that trip often.

- ▶ When working with electrical equipment inside the house or shop, be aware that this equipment can spark when flammable vapors, gases or dust are present.
- ▶ Do not overstretch a cord or use frayed or damaged cords.
- ▶ During storms, lightning can enter homes through corded phones, televisions, radios or computers. Lightning can also travel through plumbing, so do not take a bath, shower or wash dishes when you see lightning strikes. If possible, unplug appliances and electronics before the storm, including cellphones that are charging via electricity.

I encourage you to talk with your kids about playing it safe and smart around electricity. Help them be aware of overhead power lines near where they play outdoors.

Our top priority is providing an uninterrupted energy supply 24/7, 365 days per year, but equally important is keeping our community safe around electricity.

Contact us for additional electrical safety tips or if you would like us to provide a safety demonstration at your school or upcoming community event. ❁

Small coin with a huge meaning

And other metal detecting treasures of one cooperative member

By Amy Wellington, *Director of Communications*



UNCOVERING CO-OP HISTORY: Dave Van Cise, left, found the Willie Wiredhand commemorative coin on George Dayton's property.

IT ALL began about four years ago during hunting season, when a friend lost a gold ring while gutting a deer. This ring had great sentimental value to the distraught hunter, so Dave Van Cise borrowed a metal detector from another friend and began searching. He and his girlfriend, Tammy Hert, spent hours “swinging,” as they say in metal-detecting speak when referring to the motion of the detector. They found lots of interesting items, he said, but not the ring.

That is until they had given up and were heading back to the house. Hert happened to look down at just the right moment. There it was in the tracks left by a four-wheeler — the ring. Despite finding the ring without the aid of the

metal detector, Van Cise was hooked.

Van Cise lives on co-op lines at the top of a rolling country hill, just north-east of Townville in Crawford County. Looking toward Townville from his property, you can see the old Fiely farm on the next hill. “This is God’s country,” I’ve heard people say about Steuben Township, and I can certainly see why.

I was called to the Van Cise property to see a special coin he found while metal detecting on his neighbor’s land. Van Cise prefers to hunt for coins. One of his most prized finds is an Indian head penny

from 1869, which he believes is worth about \$89. He’s not in it to make money, though, Van Cise says. He hasn’t yet sold any of his finds and never really intends to.

But that wasn’t the coin I was there to see.

With his Minelab Equinox metal detector, Van Cise can precisely zero in on specific coins. For example, when the device displays the number 27, he knows it could be a dime, 31 indicates a quarter, 24 is a penny, and more specifically, 19 is an Indian head penny. The number 16 on the display means gold, but Van Cise typically ignores that number because it also is the number for old beer tabs — and there are far more of those in the ground than gold jewelry.

According to Van Cise, one of his metal-detecting friends explains the odds of finding gold very pointedly. For every 1,500 beer tabs found, there is one gold ring. Those are some very disheartening odds.

Van Cise chooses to metal detect wherever he can obtain permission, usually on his friends’ or family’s properties. But there is a method to his metal-detecting process — or a science — that he employs. Using an old map book of all the townships in Crawford County from 1876, Van Cise can identify where buildings used to be to home in on a location. The map book



TREASURE TROVE: Dave Van Cise displays many of his treasures, each with a unique story of its own.

BUILDING PROGRESS



On June 21, 1960 the contracts were signed for the construction of your new Headquarters Building. Those participating in the signing pictured above are: Seated left to right - Harry Burrows, President of your Electric Co-op; A. C. Henneous, Lakes Electric; W. M. DeArment, Associated Contractors. Standing left to right - Wm. Gorman, Co-op Attorney; H. Dale Mamford, Co-op Secretary; Wm. C. Bloomstine, bondman; Winifred Nuber, Secretary, Lakes Electric; J. H. Moss, bondman; and Francis Davidson, Architect.



**HERE'S YOUR
 SILVER
 JUBILEE COIN**

**Worth \$1.00 toward your lunch when presented at
 time of registration at ANNUAL MEETING.**

ONLY ONE will be redeemed per member.

LUNCH WILL BE SERVED ON THE GROUNDS

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THE COIN: The images above show the front and back of the silver jubilee coin, respectively. Northwestern's 24th annual meeting was held in August 1960 at the Crawford County Fairgrounds.

ANNUAL MEETING LUNCH ON WILLIE WIREDHAND: The image at left was found in the official annual meeting notice for August 1960.

aluminum coin that's about the size of a 50-cent piece. There was a cartoon character on one side with the words, "Willie Wiredhand Value Coin." The other side revealed the purpose of this unique coin, dated 1960: It was the silver jubilee (25th anniversary) of America's rural electric systems.

Van Cise was excited to share this find with his buddy, Rob Burns, who worked for Northwestern REC at the time. News of this coin made its way through the co-op like wildfire and landed in my inbox. Burns has since retired from the co-op, but was more than happy to connect me recently with Van Cise.

Doing a little digging of my own — in the co-op archives — I was able to track down Northwestern's official annual meeting

itself is a beautiful old relic of prints with hand-drawn details and extremely accurate information.

There could have been an old mill or church or barn on a property back in 1876 that is no longer there. Those are all great areas to metal detect, according to Van Cise, so is swinging near old foundations.

You will find far more trash than treasures, however, which I, too, have discovered metal detecting on my own property. Van Cise simply enjoys spending the time metal detecting, whether he finds any treasures or not. It's his alone time, where he can clear his head.

But when you find that one treasure, you certainly can't wait to share it with others. That's what happened about a year ago, when Van Cise found a very

interesting coin on the property of his neighbor, George Dayton.

The Van Cise family has deep roots in Crawford County and has owned various properties in Steuben Township for many generations. They have been co-op members since electricity was first available at their farm. According to Van Cise's father, Gordon, there wasn't any electricity in their area until around 1938. The elder Van Cise remembers his own father telling stories about how he helped set poles to bring electric to the rural area. In a way, they could be considered some of the forefathers of Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC).

Van Cise discovered there was a coin buried just below the surface on Dayton's property. He dug up this shiny

notice from 1960, which would have been the co-op's 24th anniversary. And sure enough, there it was: an image of the silver jubilee coin worth \$1 toward lunch for one member.

Willie Wiredhand has been the mascot for electric cooperatives since 1950, and the coin itself was to commemorate the 25th anniversary of rural electrification, which began in 1935 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration.

Although that little coin has no monetary value, it is certainly a priceless artifact for us and other co-ops across the nation. It represents the magnificent movement that brought light to rural America. Thank you, Dave, for sharing your find with us. Keep on swinging! 🌟

A QUICK GUIDE TO GENERATORS

With proper use and maintenance, generators provide great convenience during a power outage. Before you purchase a generator, determine your backup power needs to select the right size. Make a list of essential appliances and devices you'll want to power during an outage, then total the required wattage.



RECOMMENDED IF YOU...

... **rarely** lose power.

Recreational Inverter

Up to 2,000 watts

Lightweight, about 60 pounds

Quiet, easy to store

Power: fridge and a few smaller items (i.e. lamp, phone charger and home security system)

Midsized Inverter

Up to 3,500 watts

Weights up to 150 pounds

Power: fridge, laptop, five to 10 lights, phone charger, home security system and 10K BTU air conditioner

... **occasionally** lose power.
Transfer switch required.

Portable Generators and Large Inverters

Up to 7,500 watts

Weights about 300 pounds

Power: fridge, gas furnace, 10K BTU air conditioner, dishwasher, multiple lights, TV, laptop and more

Ability to connect to home's breaker panel

... **frequently** lose power.
Transfer switch required.

Home Standby

Up to 20,000 watts

Must be permanently installed; starts automatically during outage

Power: nearly all home appliances and electronics (simultaneously)

Can run indefinitely on natural gas or propane

Recommended if you frequently lose power.

SAFETY FIRST!

- Let us know if you purchase a generator that you plan to connect to an electric panel.
- Improperly installed generators can create back feed, which is dangerous to our crews and the community.
Before using the generator, disconnect the normal source of power coming into your home/business.
- Never operate a generator indoors or in an enclosed space.

Disclaimer: Please note safety requirements may differ based on the type of generator you purchase. Thoroughly read the operator's manual and know how to shut off the generator quickly.

Source: Consumer Reports