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Members Heard How Cooperatives will Charge Their Future at Barron Electric's 86th Annual Meeting

More than 300 members and guests enjoyed a delicious breakfast served by the Barron VFW at Barron Electric's 86th Annual Meeting; the theme was "Charging Our Future." Brent Ridge, President and CEO of Dairyland Power Cooperative, spoke about renewables and reliability, indicating that carbon reduction is a big challenge. Dairyland Power is Barron Electric's wholesale power supplier. Brent commented, "One of our goals is to methodically lower our carbon output without sacrificing safety and reliability." He told members that Dairyland Power had very good sales in the market and plants ran efficiently in 2021; therefore, margins were returned to the cooperatives. Brent also discussed how energy resources will change in the future to meet our energy needs. Brent highlighted NuScale, their mission is to provide scalable advanced nuclear technology by creating an energy source that is smarter, cleaner, safer, and cost-competitive. Earlier this year, NuScale and Dairyland Power announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding to evaluate the potential deployment of NuScale's advanced nuclear technology.

Barron Electric's General Manager Aaron Torud talked about the Level 2 and Level 3 electric vehicle chargers that were installed in Trego last summer filling a 155-mile gap between fast chargers on Highway 53. The cooperative is purchasing a F-150 Lightning to add to their fleet and will evaluate how effective it is versus the gas vehicles. He discussed a variety of energy efficiency tools and encouraged members to visit barronelectric.com to try the Home Energy Adventure with tips to save energy and money, view videos on how to save energy, and check out the Use Energy Wisely brochure.

Randy Cook, Barron Electric's Board President, remarked, "Barron Electric has the lowest rates in the Dairyland Cooperative system." He shared with members that Right-of-Way clearing and maintenance projects help to improve reliability. He also stressed the importance of safety and ensuring that all employees go home safe every day.

Incumbents Michael Baker, Patricia Mandel, and Richard Bol were reelected to Barron Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors representing Districts 3, 6, and 9 respectively.

Twelve members were winners of the \$100 bill credits including: Vivian Bergman, Herb Cook, Kelly Cupp, Neil Elskamp, Lois Haynie, Kenneth Noesen, Edward Olson, Anthony Richter, Lois Ristow, Larry Snowbank, David Wigchers and Lawrence Wilhelmy. Raelynn Cox and Emily O'Connell were the winners of the Fire Tablets, drawn at the Kids' Program. The Cumberland Food Pantry collected over 190 pounds of items.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions. One member asked, "How will we meet demand with EVs?" Barron Electric would upgrade electric service, transformers, and substations. Brent commented, "We would shift how we operate at a transmission level, but I believe this is many years away." Another member asked if Dairyland Power and Barron Electric would install more charging stations? Charge™ is a group of cooperatives who are working together to help promote EVs and help build the infrastructure of electric charging stations. They also told members that it was cheaper to charge vehicles at night at home.

Thank you to the businesses and organizations who donated items to the event. Maple Creek Sugarbush, Lost in the Woods Acres, Helms, A&M Pure, and Hustads donated maple syrup. Barron Kwik Trip donated bottled water, and the Barron County Dairy Promoters and the Cumberland Airport provided griddles.

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