

ST. CROIX ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S Energy LIFESTYLES MAGAZINE

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The Raider Works team from Hudson High School who designed and built vertical racks for storing conduit at St. Croix Electric Co-op included (from left) Dominic Carlberg (welding/fabrication), Instructor Tom Klatt, Isaac Scott (welding/fabrication), Project Foreman Will Zelenak (welding/fabrication), Bryce Schindler (welding/fabrication) and Gabe Dougherty (painter/quality assurance).

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS BENEFIT LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL & CO-OP

St. Croix Electric Cooperative's storage of conduit (tubes used to protect and route electrical wiring in a building or structure) has become more compact and efficient thanks to a collaboration between SCEC leadership and a group of students – and their teacher – from Hudson High School.

When he was visiting another co-op in late 2019, some vertical storage racks caught Operations Manager Rob Dooley's eye: "We had our conduit stored in three different places and all horizontally, taking up a lot of space. I knew something like this could save a lot of space and be much more convenient."

He snapped a few photos and over the next couple months scoured the internet trying to find the racks – or something similar – with no luck. He finally called the warehouseman at the other co-op (Cooperative Principle #6 is Cooperation Among Cooperatives) and found out the racks were custom-made by a local welder. When SCEC President/CEO Brian Zelenak heard of his operations manager's pursuit he knew the solution: Raider Works, a student run school-based enterprise at Hudson High School that focuses on construction and manufacturing work done in-District and for local businesses.

SCEC's chief executive officer had heard from his sons about the real-life projects they worked on as part of a technical education class at HHS: "Instead of just saying 'Here, weld these two pieces of pipe



together,' they were building real equipment to be used by a real business..." Around the time students were returning to in-person learning, Zelenak contacted technical education teacher Tom Klatt – who is not only one of the two Raider Works advisors (the other is Aaron Haskins), but is also the son of longtime SCEC District 7 Director Fran Klatt.

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and see a photo of the racks in use!*



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"The kids were eager to work on a real life project for a local company," said the younger Klatt, who is himself a member of SCEC. "It was not a complicated project, but it involved cutting, bending and welding angle iron and tubing."

After Klatt and his students drew up plans and came up with a list of needed supplies, Zelenak visited a local steel supplier who delivered them to the school. Within two weeks, the project was complete with five students working together one hour per day and a few coming in during study halls and advisory (15 hours total).

"This project and many like it here at school are hands on experiences where students learn by doing projects for others. The pride of building something a business is willing to buy far surpasses any grade they could receive in a class," Klatt said. "These students have been learning how to work with customers one-on-one, order materials, read blueprints, weld, paint and gained OSHA 10 Certification."

Project Foreman Will Zelenak said the project was like none other he'd worked on before: "I haven't worked on a project this size before. We really needed to measure and check to keep it square multiple times. With a big project like this it is amazing how being just a fraction of an inch off can grow over 8 or 9 feet."

Zelenak was joined on the crew by fellow welder/fabricators Dominic Carlberg, Isaac Scott and Bryce Schindler and painter Gabe Dougherty, who also took on the role of quality assurance.

The finished product is just what he was looking for, Operations Manager Dooley said: "The quality is excellent, and we now have a much more compact and efficient storage for our conduit."



Custom storage racks built for SCEC by a group of Hudson High School students have made it much easier and more efficient to find the conduit needed by field staff at the co-op.

Previously the materials were spread over several locations throughout the warehouse and yard.

SCEC POLICY 1015: COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY GRANTS

St. Croix Electric Cooperative's grant program demonstrate the cooperative's values and commitment to community by helping others in serving the unmet humanitarian, social and educational needs within the Cooperative's general service area.

Grant applications eligible for funding will result in a humanitarian, social or educational benefit/outcome.

Grant funds may be used in support of programs or people outside of the Cooperative's service area, but the ultimate benefit from the expenditure must occur at the local level and within the Cooperative's general service area.

Applications can be found online at scecnet.net: Look for the ORANGE Grants button or find it under Community!