

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 11, 2021

## **Whitewater Valley REMC, Hoosier Energy present Cope Environmental Center with \$50,000 donation**

*Living Building Certification brings much more than regeneration and self sufficiency*

**WAYNE COUNTY, Ind.** – In celebration of the Cope Environmental Center achieving the *Living Building Certification*, Whitewater Valley REMC, along with Hoosier Energy, presented a \$50,000 check at the center's open house earlier this week. The contribution will assist the organization in its mission and vision of educating children and securing a sustainable future.

In 2014, the Cope Center announced it would build their new facility with the goal of attaining the rare *Living Building Certification*. At the time, just 23 buildings in the world claimed this accreditation and only after each had completed the *Living Building Challenge*. The challenge has proven to be the ultimate green building standard, applicable to any building type worldwide.

"The *Living Building Challenge* is the most rigorous benchmark of sustainability in the built environment," said Mary Jo Thomas, President and CEO of Whitewater Valley REMC. "It is the gold standard, and the Cope Center deserves a great deal of recognition for achieving that standard. We're proud to contribute to the organization's important mission and support its many contributions to communities in our area."

*Living Buildings* are created for the purpose of incorporating regenerative design solutions that improve the local environment, rather than simply reducing harm.

"This is not an easy road to travel, and the Cope Center has persevered," said Shannon Thom, Senior Vice President of Member Engagement at Hoosier Energy.

"We're honored to be part of the celebration and to provide the funding for the Cope Center that was earmarked for them once they achieved this tremendous milestone."

In 1947, Jim and Helen Cope purchased 30 acres of farmland between Centerville and Richmond, Indiana, and they began planting a variety of trees, shrubs and other plants. They pursued a sustainable lifestyle which involved the use of alternative energy, energy conservation, composting and organic gardening.

In 1992, Jim and Helen partnered with their friend Francis Parks, a dedicated botanist, horticulturist and conservationist, to create the Francis Parks Foundation and the Cope Environmental Center to give permanent protection to this valuable piece of land and to teach others what they had learned.

The Cope Center is now 130 acres, educating children in outdoor classrooms through interactive, hands-on sustainability and nature-based programming for schools and other groups. The organization partners with businesses, universities and other non-profits to teach the principles of sustainability.

For information regarding the *Living Building Challenge*, go to <https://living-future.org/lbc>. \_  
###

#### **About Cope Environmental Center**

We educate children in our 130-acre outdoor classroom through interactive, hands-on sustainability and nature-based programming for schools and other groups. We partner with businesses, universities, and other non-profits to teach the principles of sustainability. We demonstrate this 'green' lifestyle by giving tours of our own [Sustainable Living Demonstration Home](#) that is powered by solar power and geothermal, applying strict green practices for our offices, and many other ways.

#### **About Whitewater Valley REMC**

Whitewater Valley Rural Electric Membership Corporation is a not-for-profit utility distributing electricity to nearly 12,000 meters across its six-county service area in east-central Indiana. Located in Liberty, Ind., the cooperative employs 27 people. An active member of the community, Whitewater Valley REMC and its employees support the area through a variety of scholarships, financial contributions, in-kind donations, volunteerism, and other programs.

#### **About Hoosier Energy**

Founded in 1949, Hoosier Energy is a generation and transmission cooperative (G&T) with headquarters in Bloomington, Indiana. The G&T provides electric power and services to 18 member distribution cooperatives in central and southern Indiana and southeastern Illinois. We are a community-focused organization that works to efficiently deliver affordable, reliable and safe energy. Collectively, our 18 members serve more than 760,000 consumers. Hoosier Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer. For more information, visit [www.hoosierenergy.com](http://www.hoosierenergy.com).