



Meet One Of The Members Of Your Co-op's Board Of Directors

John Lord

By Charly Markwart

If you want to learn what kind of person HomeWorks' District 1 Director John Lord is, you need only to listen to him tell the story of how, one day five years ago, an out-of-the-blue question at church inspired him to become a violin maker.

"One Sunday this man asked if anyone wanted to learn to make a violin," said Lord. "Well, I'd always enjoyed working with wood, so I stood up and said I'd like to learn. I started working with him on Tuesday evenings, and pretty soon I was making a violin."

Five years later, Lord speaks enthusiastically about the fruits of his labor, a beautiful spruce and curly maple violin with intricate details that reflect his keen passion for the craft. And when the subject changes to his service on the HomeWorks board of directors to which he was elected in 2016, that same enthusiasm shines through.

"I ran for the board of directors because I wanted to go that extra mile," he said. "I had served as the district chairman for several years, and it just seemed like a logical progression to go from district chairman to the district director. I just wanted to serve."

The HomeWorks board of directors was a natural place for Lord to fulfill that yearning to serve, as he himself has been served by the co-op for nearly 70 years.

"I've been involved with the co-op since 1948," he said. "That's when my parents moved out to where I grew up, on a 15-acre fruit farm outside Charlotte. We had Tri-County Electric service there, and I've been involved with the co-op ever since."

Lord, who now resides in Leslie, speaks fondly of his long history with the cooperative. But now, as a director, he is looking to the future of HomeWorks, and he's excited about what he sees.

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"Something I'm most excited about is the possibility of the fiber to the home project," he said. "If that goes through, we'll be able to sit back and say, 'We did this. We brought everyone into the 21st century and gave them the opportunity to be able to communicate with anyone from all over the world, like people in the city are able to do now.'" (HomeWorks staff has been studying the possibility of implementing fiber to the home service. The board of directors is expected to vote on the issue in October.)

To Lord, the chance to give others opportunities like that is a big part of what it means to be a HomeWorks director.

"I'm representing my friends and my neighbors," he said.

That's a responsibility Lord does not take lightly.

"What makes an electric cooperative different from an investor-owned utility is that as a cooperative, we are answerable to and owned by our members," he said. "That's the very foundation of why we exist."

Outside of his work with the co-op and his newfound passion for violin making, Lord enjoys volunteering with the Dimondale Lions Club and the Girl Scouts, traveling and spending time with his wife of over 40 years and their three children, 10 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren. ■

On your board of directors, John represents District 1, which is Eaton, Ingham and Jackson Counties. He was elected to the board in 2016.