



**Central Wisconsin
Electric Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



By Mike Wade,
President & CEO

2020 ENDED STRONG, AND THE WORK CONTINUES IN 2021

With the new year comes a new budget and new goals for our cooperative to achieve. The Board of Directors approved our capital, work plan, and expense budgets at their December board meeting. In addition, department goals were reviewed and approved.

Staff will now begin the process of implementing the new budget and will start work on their 2021 goals. As always, our focus will be to make improvements that enable us to better serve our membership and provide the safe and reliable electric energy our members expect and deserve.

We have completed our Toys for Tots campaign for 2020 and as in past years, it was a huge success. Given the impact of COVID-19 in our communities, the program is more important than ever. We collected toys from across our service area and helped provide a joyous

Christmas to more than 1,100 children in central Wisconsin. My thanks to all of you who donated a gift and helped make the Christmas of one of the children in our communities a little brighter.

Congratulations to Sam Trzebiatowski for winning the WECA essay contest. Sam is the son of Tim and Jolene Trzebiatowski and is a student at Rosholt High School. I enjoyed reading Sam's essay and I commend him for experiencing life without electricity for a few days. Sam's essay speaks of the importance of electric energy, but it also reminds us that some of our greatest joys are the simpler things in life. Congratulations Sam, and job well done.

As new construction and maintenance projects begin in the spring, I encourage all of our members to be courteous and respectful to our line crews and contractors as they work on our system. Our field crews will perform hazard recognition inspections during the winter months and contractors will be perform-

ing maintenance of our reclosers starting in February. You may also see our vegetation management contractor clearing our right-of-way of unwanted brush and limbs that are encroaching upon our overhead lines.

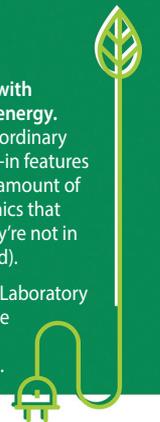
If you have any questions about the work being done, do not hesitate to contact our office. Safety is our number one priority, so let's all do our part to keep our employees safe on the job.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.

Source: www.nrel.gov



MY CO-OP

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative was held both in-person and via teleconference on December 1, 2020 at 7:58 a.m. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The agenda, minutes of the October 29, 2020 meeting, new and terminated memberships, monthly safety and compliance report, and estate capital credit retirements were approved.

Action Items

- Monthly Financial Statements and Reports were approved. Finance Committee reviewed checks written and the board and CEO expenses.
 - The board approved proposed changes to Board Policy No. 202-Director Fees and Expenses and Chapter 4.0-Billings, Payment and Special Charges of the Service Rules and Regulations as presented by the Governance Committee.
 - The board reviewed the 2021 NRECA/CFC Conference Schedule and approved attendance, also selecting the Voting and Alternate Delegates for the conferences as scheduled.
 - A presentation was made on NRECA's COVID-19 Response Survey that we participated in along with 19 other electric cooperatives from across the country.
 - The board approved a Christmas gift for all employees.
 - The board reviewed Policy 406-Corporate Contributions and Sponsorships.
 - The board approved a new Power Vision Loan for \$10 million with Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC).
- The board approved the representatives for the 2021 WECA Committees. Those being: Director Rombalski – Legislative and Regulatory Committee, Director Eckendorf – Education and Member Services Committee, Director Smith – JT&S Committee, and Kevin Kurtzweil – JT&S Rules Sub-Committee, and JT&S Apprenticeship Sub-Committee.
 - The board approved becoming a member of CHARGE EV, LLC for the purpose of becoming a shareholder of ZEF Energy with 24 other participating electric cooperatives.
 - Operations and Engineering – Kevin Kurtzweil, VP of operations, reported on the progress of the line crews and on several construction projects. An unused radio tower was successfully removed on November 16 thanks to Tower Technologies Group, Wellers Salvage, the Shawano County Highway Department, and our CWEC crews.
 - Accounting and Finance – Financial reports were reviewed by Lila Shower, VP of accounting and finance.
 - Member Services – Brenda Mazemke, manager of member relations, reported the Operations Round Up Trust Board met on October 8 and approved a total of \$3,450 in donation requests. The Member Appreciation Breakfast held on October 31 was a huge success thanks to the help of the staff. Toys For Tots is in full swing with pick-ups from the collection box sites on Friday, December 4. Distribution of the toys will begin next week.
 - President and CEO – Mike Wade, CEO, reported on his submitted report.
 - Meeting adjourned at 1:07 p.m.



CWEC JOINS REGIONAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING NETWORK

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) is one of more than 25 electric co-ops that have joined together to create a regional electric vehicle (EV) charging network across Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota named CHARGE EV, LLC. The network includes more than 30 Level 2 and Level 3 charging stations.

“We are excited about being part of the CHARGE EV network with our fellow electric cooperatives in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa,” said Mike Wade, president and CEO of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative. “As the sale of electric vehicles increases, we want to ensure that drivers have adequate charging locations as they travel in Wisconsin and the upper Midwest.”

The group of co-ops is planning for future growth in EVs, and wants to alleviate “range anxiety,” which is the concern some people have about traveling in an EV without a place to charge their vehicle.

“Our goal is to provide EV owners peace of mind driving from Iowa to northern Wisconsin, or from Minnesota to Illinois, knowing there are co-op-powered chargers along their route. That will give people confidence to consider an EV and encourage growth in the EV market,” said Jeff Springer,

manager of innovation and efficient electrification at Dairyland Power Cooperative located in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

The CHARGE EV infrastructure is just the start as the group plans for additional investments in the EV market including member education on installing home chargers and encouraging members to test drive EVs.

CWEC’s support of electric vehicles began in 2019 when it installed a Level 2 electric vehicle charging station at its Rosholt headquarters for the public to use. Also, in 2019, CWEC purchased a Chevrolet Bolt to help educate its members and surrounding communities about electric vehicles. The Bolt is a 100% electric vehicle.

“The age of electric vehicles is dawning and CHARGE EV is a great example of the support electric cooperatives provide the rural communities we serve,” Wade said.

Charger locations and other information can be found at www.charge.coop.

After the creation of CHARGE EV, it was announced that it had invested in ZEF Energy Inc. ZEF Energy has successfully worked with electric co-ops and municipalities since 2014. It has a ZEFNET utility platform. The ZEFNET platform is a turn-key approach to managing residential and commercial charger load and allows utilities to gather revenue grade metering and conduct precision load control.



SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE

Each winter, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative conducts hazard recognition inspections of its overhead powerlines throughout the entire CWEC service territory. This year’s focus will be on the 7,200 high-voltage lines, but low-voltage lines will also be inspected. Some of the things CWEC personnel look for include: frayed conductors, low sagging spans of wires, and chipped insulators, just to name a few.

These inspections include visually looking at everything in the entire CWEC system, and making corrections as problems are found. The inspection process started in mid-January and is expected to last around two months.

The goal of conducting these inspections each winter is to prevent power outages, and to promote safety of the CWEC membership and the public.

In February, CWEC will also be performing maintenance on oil circuit reclosers in the areas covered by the Iola and Sannes substations. The townships for each substation include: Iola Substation – Iola, Helvetia, Union, New Hope, Harrison, Wyoming, St. Lawrence, and Dupont; Sannes Substation: Scandinavia and Amherst.

The maintenance will include changing the oil and making sure all the contacts and moveable parts are working properly to open under fault conditions.

CHRISTMAS COLORING CONTEST WINNERS!

AGE 6 & UNDER



First Place
Ean Schulist



Second Place
Renly Skierka



Third Place
Isaiah Anderson

7 TO 10 YEARS OLD



First Place
Ava Schulist



Second Place
Allison Raddatz



Third Place
Ashlyn Uttecht

TRZEBIATOWSKI WINS WECA 2020 ESSAY CONTEST

When Sam Trzebiatowski entered the 2020 WECA Essay Contest, he wasn't sure what to expect, since it was the first scholarship he had applied for.

"I really didn't have my hopes up because I wasn't sure how many people submitted (an essay), but I thought I gave myself the best chance I had," Trzebiatowski said.

As it turned out, more than 100 essays were submitted for the contest, and Trzebiatowski was accurate in his assessment. He did give himself the best chance to win. He won the essay scholarship, and the \$1,000 that went with the victory.

Trzebiatowski's winning essay was based on him opting to live off the grid, in a tent for three days, without electronics, heat, or refrigerated food, to fully appreciate what life would be like without electricity, which he said by day three was harder than he thought.

He wrote in his essay, "I thought I would be able to do the challenge very easily because I feel like I am a low



maintenance person ... but it did not work out as I had imagined ... Reflecting on those three days, even though I thought I had a well thought-out plan, being without electricity is an experience I hope to not have again for a long time."

Trzebiatowski said his family enjoys camping, but they usually stay in a cabin or a place that has electricity. With his enjoyment of the outdoors, Trzebiatowski thought it wouldn't be difficult to camp without electricity.

"It was pretty difficult," Trzebiatowski admitted. "I guess the hardest thing

was not talking to my friends because I normally do a lot of things with them and just have a good time. I guess keeping everything to myself and trying to find things to do alone was pretty hard."

After finding out he won the essay scholarship, Trzebiatowski said "I was very happy that my three days of loneliness paid off."

Trzebiatowski, a senior at Rosholt High School, said the scholarship will help fund his post-high school education. He hasn't chosen a college yet, but plans to pursue becoming a pharmacist.

"I like medicine and the chemistry aspect of it," he said. "Normally, it's like eight years to become a pharmacist. There are a few programs at some of the schools I want to look at that could get me on a faster track. So, getting that done in a shorter amount of time than I had hoped would be nice."

To read Trzebiatowski's essay visit, www.cwecoop.com.

NEW BUDGET BILLING OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR CWEC MEMBERS

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative is changing the way it does its Budget Billing Program.

No longer will a member's bill be recalculated twice a year under the program. Bill recalculation will now take place only once per year, on Dec. 31. The change will allow members to pay equal payments for 12 months before the bill payment recalculation takes place.

Under the new Budget Billing Program, members who wish to participate in the program will have the choice of two plans – Fixed Budget Plan and Variable Budget Plan.

Under the Fixed Budget Plan, a member will pay a fixed monthly billing amount based on the member's average usage of the previous 12 months. Each January, the fixed monthly billing amount will be recalculated based on the member's remaining balance and the average bill of the previous 12 months.

Under the Variable Budget Plan, a member will pay the average of the previous 11 months plus the current month. With each new bill, the oldest month's usage will be dropped from the average and your current month's usage will be added. Monthly budget payments fluctuate monthly because they are

based on a rolling 12-month average.

CWEC understands the importance of budget payment plans because such plans help members manage their electric bills by leveling out the highs and lows associated with seasonal fluctuations of electric energy consumption. It is our hope that these two new budget plans provide our members the flexibility they need to manage the payment of their electric bill each month.

These two new budget plan options went into effect when CWEC prepared the bills for January. In January, CWEC sent a letter to members who were enrolled in the Budget Billing Program explaining the change and that they should sign-up for one of the new Budget Billing Program options.

Members who were enrolled in the Budget Billing Program, but didn't receive the letter, are encouraged to contact the CWEC office at 800-377-2932, Monday – Friday, between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. to choose the best budget plan option for them.

More information about the Budget Billing Program, as well as an application form, is available on the CWEC website at www.cwecoop.com.



10401 Lystul Rd., P.O. Box 100,
Rosholt, WI 54473
715-677-2211 • 800-377-2932

www.cwecoop.com

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AMID CHALLENGES, TOYS FOR TOTS CAMPAIGN A SUCCESS

For more than 15 years Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) has partnered with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve to organize a Toys for Tots campaign in the CWEC service area. Through the campaign, CWEC provides help to area families in need by supplying donated toys to the families, so they can give their children Christmas presents.

Through this campaign, toys are donated at a variety of collection sites. The toys are collected, sorted, and then distributed to communities and families in the CWEC service area. This area covers parts of: western Waupaca County (including Iola-Scandinavia and Manawa school districts), northern Portage County (including Rosholt School District), southern Marathon County (including Wittenberg-Biramwood School District), and western Shawano County (including Tigerton and Bowler school districts).

With the 2020 CWEC Toys for Tots campaign taking place in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, CWEC knew the need for toys would be high. It also knew that there would be many additional challenges in collecting and distributing toys to area families in need.

With the help of CWEC members and others in the CWEC service area, the

2020 CWEC Toys for Tots campaign was a success, with toys distributed to more than 1,100 area children, which was an increase from 2019.

“This year’s Toys for Tots campaign was facing a higher number of requests for toys than usual, and our members and communities truly stepped up to help bring the joy of Christmas and send a message of hope to our less fortunate children,” said Brenda Mazemke, manager of member relations for CWEC.

Even though a few of the regular collection sites opted out this year because of COVID-19, a few new collection sites were added. Some collection sites also got creative in how they collected toys for the campaign.

For example, Danes Hall of Waupaca was not able to hold its normal in-person holiday event, but it hosted a toy-collecting event where people could drive up and drop off toys for the campaign. The toys collected at that event filled up a suburban to the roof.

“Thank you for your generous donations of toys and money. We were able to help more than 1,100 children in our service area. Every child deserves a little Christmas,” Mazemke said.

The success of the campaign was also aided by the involvement of all departments at the co-op.



Mike Wade, President & CEO
Bert Lehman, Editor

Board of Directors

District 1

Anthony Buss, Jr.
Chairman
715-701-1358

Tom Smith
Vice-Chairman
715-701-2051

District 2

Lee Lehrer
920-851-4545
715-677-3850

Leonard Oppor
715-701-2042

Michael Schultz
715-370-1378

District 3

Elaine Eckendorf
Secretary-Treasurer
715-701-2052

Sue Rombalski
715-701-2053

Our Mission

We are your trusted energy partner and provider of valued community support.