



Above: Ms. Marquardt's students dug the holes and planted the trees. Below: Ms. Minniecheske's students installed fencing around the trees to keep the deer away.



TIGERTON STUDENTS PLANT TREES

On Friday, April 29, Ms. Marquardt's sixth-grade students and Ms. Minniecheske's eighth-grade students along with Brenda Mazemke, CWEC member relations coordinator, and Mark Forseth, CWEC vice president of member relations, met at the Tigerton School Forest to plant various trees and shrubs in the designated arboretum area of the school forest. Each year Wisconsin recognizes the last Friday in April as Arbor Day.

The sixth-grade students planted 14 trees and six shrubs along the drive entering the forest and the eighth-grade students installed fencing around the trees to protect them from the animals. Each of the trees and shrubs selected for the arboretum is a native Wisconsin specimen and should do well in Shawano County.

Trees and supplies were purchased thanks to support from the Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative and the Operation Round Up Program.



By Mike Wade,
President & CEO



Central Wisconsin
Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

FROM HERE TO THERE

Living in Wisconsin means enjoying summer. This is my third year in Wisconsin and I understand why everyone makes such a fuss about it. Summer is the time when coats and snow shovels are a distant memory and we head to a festival or campground to enjoy the great outdoors. Summer is also a time for air conditioning and higher energy usage. Be mindful of your thermostat setting to help conserve electricity and keep your summer electric bills affordable.

Our summer construction and maintenance schedule is underway, and we are working on our annual vegetation management projects. Our vegetation right-of-way crews are traveling our distribution lines performing much-needed tree trimming and chemical spraying of the underbrush. This is an extremely important part of our effort to provide reliable and safe electric service, and we appreciate your continued support of this program.

As summer energy usage climbs, we will be calling on our members to reduce energy consumption through our load control program. This is a valuable program that allows our members to receive reduced energy costs in exchange for helping the cooperative reduce our overall energy peak.

Be safe as you celebrate our nation's independence on the Fourth of July. Enjoy the fireworks, parades, and barbecues, and remember the debt we owe to all of those who came before us to protect our freedom. Enjoy your summer.



Independence Day Celebration

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative will be closed on Monday, July 4, 2016, in recognition of the Independence Day holiday. From everyone at CWEC, we wish you a safe and enjoyable Fourth of July holiday.



RATE STUDY: Managing Costs

Over the past few months, we have discussed the rate study undertaken by the cooperative. The rate study is a necessary responsibility of management and the board of directors of the cooperative to ensure the cooperative continues to operate in a financially sound manner.

Past articles focused on the rate study process including looking at the cooperative's revenue requirements and examining the cooperative's cost of service (expenses). This month we'd like to continue the cost-of-service discussion by looking at how your cooperative manages costs, more specifically reviewing some of the cost-cutting measures we have implemented.

It's always our goal to provide our members with safe, reliable, and affordable electricity. It's sometimes difficult to balance all three, but rest assured your cooperative's board of directors and employees are committed to managing costs while providing you with the safe, reliable, and affordable electricity you've come to expect from us.

Your cooperative operates under a budget prepared jointly by the cooperative's board of directors and management staff. Our budget, like any household or business budget, has two basic components—income and expenses. Our income is derived mostly from the sale of electricity. Our level of sales depends greatly on the weather, which of course is something we can't control. Expenses, on the other hand, do offer certain areas that lend themselves to possible cost cutting. Your cooperative's board of directors and management take a conservative approach in analyzing expenses in all of the cooperative's departments to determine if/where potential cost-cutting opportunities exist. We're pleased to share with you some of the areas where we've been able to cut costs.

A good place to start is where we begin the budget process. Towards the end of the year each department sets goals for the upcoming year and beyond. These goals are what guide us as we move forward. We've improved the goal-setting process to include a greater amount of analysis of the budget impact the goals will have. This is done before they're considered for approval by the board. Once approved, the goals are reviewed throughout the year to assure they're being met and are within budget.

We've been able to reduce our wage expense by operating with fewer employees than we have in the past. In addition, wage adjustments have been maintained at modest levels. We've partnered with one of our neighboring cooperatives to share engineering services. To assist in controlling medical premium rates, we've implemented several wellness programs.

Our accounting department is excellent at finding ways to reduce expenses. They take full advantage of discounts offered by our vendors for early payment. They assist in

analyzing work projects to determine if any can be deferred to a later date. They work with our lenders to obtain the most favorable loan terms possible. They've implemented several bill-collecting technologies that will reduce labor expense.

As we mentioned earlier, our main revenue stream is from electric sales. Our industry is a bit unique as we bill for the use of our product after it is used. This type of billing comes with an inherent risk of a higher level of delinquency. The collection of delinquent accounts is quite costly. To help offset the increasing cost of collection of delinquent accounts, the cooperative's board of directors felt it was necessary to increase the late charge fee. An additional objective of increasing the late fee is to discourage members from paying late, which in turn reduces our costs associated

with the collection of delinquent accounts.

Your cooperative's operation department has done a great job of implementing several cost-cutting measures while not compromising our goal of providing our members with safe and reliable electricity. Our past aggressive approach to vegetation management is paying dividends as there are

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far fewer outages caused by trees and our system requires less vegetation maintenance. We've also been able to eliminate the services of a vegetation management consultant. A safety program implemented a few years ago has increased our safety performance, which has helped reduce our insurance costs. We've ratcheted up our meter and line equipment testing to ensure they're operating properly.

If you attended this year's annual meeting you probably noticed some changes. A local high school band provided the entertainment in exchange for a donation to their school. The donation was far less than we've paid for professional entertainment. We also saved money by including our annual report in the local pages of your monthly cooperative magazine instead of a stand-alone report. Most of the annual meeting door prizes (hopefully you won one) were donated by our vendors.

These are a few of the cost-cutting measures we've been able to implement. You have our commitment to continue exploring others.

OPERATION ROUND UP REACHES A MILESTONE

Recent donations approved by the co-op's Operation Round Up Trust Board allowed the program to cruise by the \$400,000 plateau to an astounding \$412,000 donated to worthwhile causes since the program's inception in 2004.

"We continue to be amazed by the amount of good this program does," said Co-op Vice President of Member Relations Mark Forseth.

Funded by volunteer donations from co-op members, Operation Round Up provides funds for worthwhile causes, including member hardship cases, educational purposes including scholarships, and charitable organizations. Recent beneficiaries of co-op members' generosity include Iola Historical Society, Town of Sharon EMS, Village of Iola, NIC Foundation, Wittenberg-Birnamwood Grapple on the Gridiron,

Tigerton's Community Garden, Wittenberg-Birnamwood Books on the Bus Program, Wittenberg-Birnamwood High School Senior Grad Bash, and the Town of Dewey Volunteer Fire Department. In addition, \$15,250 in scholarships was awarded to 60 college-bound students.

Members who choose to participate have their electric bill "rounded up" to the next highest dollar. For example, a \$95.52 bill becomes \$96.00. On average the amount contributed is 50 cents per month or \$6 a year. The monies collected are turned over to a nine-member volunteer Trust Board (one member from each of the co-op's nine sub-districts) that administers the program. Current Trust Board members are Marie Skowen, Lloyd Gutt, Mike Ekern, Gary Kolodziej, Renee Groshek, Maxine Lemke, Bonnie Paulson, Sue

Halverson, and Clifford Kessen.

"The success of Operation Round Up is due in large part to the volunteer efforts of the Trust Board," said Forseth. "On behalf of the co-op I'd like to thank all current and past board members."

"Operation Round Up has exceeded our expectations as we've been able to provide \$215,300 to families in need and charitable organizations along with providing 616 scholarships totaling \$197,400. This brings the total amount given out to a remarkable \$412,000," Forseth continued. "We'd like to thank all of the co-op members who contribute to the program for making it the success it is."

We would like to thank Lloyd Gutt and Mike Ekern for serving on the Operation Round Up board. Both men have been on the board for nine years.



1. Mike Ekern, Operation Round Up board member, presents a check to Chris Peplinski for the Wittenberg's Grapple on the Grid Iron event. 2. Ekern presents a check to Kim Norrbom from the Wittenberg-Birnamwood Booster Club for the High School Senior Grad Bash. 3. Maxine Lemke, Operation Round Up board member, presents a check to Mary Michelkamp and members of the Town of Sharon EMS. 4. Pery Bublitz (r), a member of the Tigerton Community Garden, is shown receiving a check from the Rev. Clifford Kessen (l), Operation Round Up board member. The money will go for a fence to keep out the deer. 5. Ekern presents a check to Jackie Berndt, Wittenberg-Birnamwood literacy coordinator, for the Books on the Bus Program. 6. Leroy Pukroy (l), Town of Dewey Fire Department fire chief, accepts a check from Gary Kolodziej (r), Operation Round Up board member.

MY CO-OP



DATES TO REMEMBER IN JUNE

Iola-Scandinavia Fireworks Celebration

Sunday, July 3

Kick off your Fourth of July celebration in Iola. Softball and baseball games begin at 5 p.m. Food, refreshments, and music. Fireworks start at dusk. Rain date Tuesday, July 5. Taylor Field, Iola. For more information visit www.ischamber.com.

Fourth of July Tigerton Block Party

Monday, July 4

9 a.m.–7 p.m. Food, silent auction, music, refreshments, vendors. Fireworks at dusk by the High School. Community Park, corner of Beech and Pine, Tigerton. For more information call Tigerton Mainstreet at 715-535-2110.

CWEC Office Closed

Monday, July 4

Independence Day Holiday

Rosholt Fireworks

Monday, July 4

Rosholt Fairgrounds. For more information visit www.rosholtvillage.com.



Iola Thursday Night on Main

Thursday, July 7

Gray Catz performing. Downtown Iola. Live music, food, raffle tickets, and more. Thriving Thursday's Farmer Market – Farmer's Market area, Iola. For more information visit www.ischamber.com.

Iola Car Show & Swap Meet

July 7- July 9

Midwest's largest Old Car Show –great food and camping available, Iola. For more information call 715-445-4000 or visit www.iolaoldcarshow.com.

Art on the Track (Art & Craft Fair)

Saturday, July 9

Held at the Iola-Scandinavia track, behind the Elementary School, 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m., Iola. For more information call 715-445-2411 ask for Johnathan Turba.

Iola Thursday Night on Main

Thursday, July 14

6 p.m. Harmonious Wail performing. Downtown Iola. Live music, food, raffle tickets, and more. Thriving Thursday's Farmer Market – Farmer's Market area, Iola. For more information visit www.ischamber.com.

4th Annual Soggy Bottom 5K Run/Walk

Saturday, July 16

9 a.m. Early Bird Register by June 26, \$25; after that \$30. Receive shorts, prizes, refreshments, and medals. Children 8 years of age and under are free to walk with a paid adult, but do not receive shorts or a medal. Tilleda. Proceeds go to the Tigerton Area Ambulance, sponsored by the Tilleda Advancement Association. For more information call 715-787-3751.

Tuesday Quilters of Norske Quilt Show

Saturday, July 16

10 a.m.–4 p.m., Rosholt Fair Park. Quilt show held in conjunction with Rosholt Threshere, \$5 admission fee to the grounds. Rosholt. For more information call 715-677-4809.

27th Annual Rosholt Threshere Antique & Farm

Tractor Pull

Saturday, July 16

Antique & farm tractor pull, lawn mower pulls, & music. Rosholt Fair Park, Rosholt. For more information call 715-869-7653.



Walls of Wittenberg Presents: Paul Zopel

Thursday, July 21

Smooth jazz tunes for any occasion, most of them original. WOWSPACE 114 Vinal St., Wittenberg. For more information call 715-253-3525 or visit www.wallofswittenberg.com.

Iola Thursday Night on Main

Thursday, July 21

6 p.m. Unity performing. Downtown Iola. Live music, food, raffle tickets, and more. Thriving Thursday's Farmer Market – Farmer's Market area, Iola. For more information visit www.ischamber.org.

Iola Thursday Night on Main

Thursday, July 28

6 p.m. Family Night, Tom Pease performing. Downtown Iola. Live music, food, raffle tickets, and more. Thriving Thursday's Farmer Market – Farmer's Market area, Iola. For more information visit www.ischamber.org.

49th Annual Symco Threshere &

National Antique Tractor Pull

July 29-31

Tractor pull Saturday, Parade at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday. Symco. For more information call Gary Knutz 920-757-6995.



To submit your community events email brenda.mazemke@cwecoop.com or call Brenda at 715-677-2211.

Mike Wade, President & CEO

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

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