



Tom Smith  
Board Chairman

## 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW



**B**efore I share my thoughts about some of the major happenings that took place at Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative in 2022, I want to thank all of the co-op's members, volunteer member committees, employees, and board

members for the support and commitment to CWEC. The strength of any cooperative is its membership and we are fortunate to have so many members who are willing to give of their time and talent to help keep our cooperative healthy and strong.

In 2022, we welcomed Allen Zander to the CWEC Board of Directors. Allen has brought great insight to the board, and I look forward to working with him for years to come.

As a cooperative, CWEC is guided by seven principles. One of those principles is "Concern for Community." As a participating member of the CoBank "Sharing Success" charitable contribution program, CWEC makes up to three donations totaling \$1,000 each year to qualifying 501(c)3 organizations located within communities that we serve and CoBank matches our donation to these organizations, totaling \$2,000 per organization. The CWEC matching donation comes from its Federated Youth Foundation fund. The 2022 recipient organizations included: the Mattoon Fire Department, Stockbridge-Munsee Fire Department, and Rural Health Initiative.

In December the co-op conducted another successful Marine Toys for Tots campaign that helped provide toys to more than 1,000 area children. It is an honor and a privilege to be involved with the Marine Toys for Tots organization.

In keeping with the cooperative principle dealing with education, CWEC introduced a new STEAM grant program to help extend resources to area schools to support science, technology, engineering, art, and math projects and initiatives. Three area school districts—Bowler, Tigerton, and Wittenberg-Birnamwood—applied for a STEAM grant during the first application period for the program. Each district was awarded a \$1,000 STEAM grant, with the Bowler School District's grant divided between two programs.

Last year saw the first in-person Youth Leadership Congress held since 2019. The Congress is a cooperative leadership conference for teenagers to attend, sponsored by their local cooperatives. We had one participant attend the Congress, which was held at UW-Stout in Menomonie.

As we all know, the weather can be unpredictable and 2022 had its share of storms we had to deal with. The worst storm of the year hit June 15, and left a trail of damage, especially in the Bowler/Stockbridge-Munsee area where an EF1 tornado was confirmed. In December our service area was hit with an ice storm that caused numerous power outages.

For both storms CWEC received assistance from crews from other cooperatives through the Restoration of Power in an Emergency (ROPE) program. We thank those co-ops for the help, and will gladly reciprocate in the future.

CWEC completed several projects in 2022 with the goal to have less power outages in the future.

- The three-phase Wittenberg to Almon tie was upgraded with a combination of overhead and underground cable to allow future load growth and the ability to backfeed either the Wittenberg or Almon substations.
- The Dewey substation was the fifth completed substation of our eight substations to re-analyze our existing ground grid and provide additional improvements to protect our linemen and the public from touch or step potential in certain fault situations.
- The Robin Road overhead wire rebuild was the last phase of our Wittenberg to Almon tie. The project consisted of 1.25 miles of three-phase underground and overhead upgrades.
- Our unjacketed URD cable replacement project continued, with two miles of single-phase unjacketed underground cable and two miles of three-phase unjacketed underground cable being replaced.
- Also, as an ongoing effort to improve service reliability, our crews replaced five miles of old overhead lines with new conductor.

Completing those projects required extra planning, as we continued to experience supply-chain issues. Supply-chain issues have delayed the new metering system we were to begin installing in 2023. We will move forward with the project when all supplies are obtained.

Several businesses and dairy farmers worked with us to obtain rebates for energy efficiency projects they were completing. If you are looking to complete an energy efficiency project, contact our office at 715-677-2211 to see if there are any rebates available for your project.

To conclude, I want to focus again on our members and also the CWEC employees. Both are important in order for the co-op to run smoothly. To make sure that we are meeting expectations of our members, we conducted a Member Satisfaction Survey last year. We also conducted an Employee Culture Survey to make sure the needs of our employees are being met. The data received from these surveys has been reviewed and will be used when making future decisions.

We look forward to 2023, and will strive to continue to provide our members safe and reliable energy. I look forward to seeing you at our 85th annual meeting on Thursday, April 13 at 6 p.m.

