



Lila Shower,  
President & CEO

## WINTER WORK INCLUDES MAINTENANCE OF ELECTRIC LINES

Last year in my February column for this magazine, I wrote about how I am from a family of ski jumpers, cross country skiers, and downhill skiers, and how much I enjoy winter sports. I must have jinxed last winter because it was the first time in more than 50 years that the Iola Winter Sports Club did not have enough snow to host its annual Winter Carnival ski jumping event which is held the first weekend in February. It was very sad that the event was cancelled last year. Hopefully we have some snow by the time you are reading this.

Whether we have snow or not, our linemen are out working to keep electricity flowing to our members. You may notice line crews in the field performing a visual inspection of our overhead lines. They are identifying hazards that have the potential to cause an outage in the future. This year we are going the extra mile, so to speak; we are

inspecting from the transformer all the way to your meter. Winter is the perfect time for us to perform this type of work before the leaves are back on the trees and the busy summer construction schedule begins.

Our line crews are also changing out damaged utility poles. We have a contractor inspect our poles every year, and then we change them out based on their findings.

I encourage all of our members to be courteous to our line crews and contractors as they work on our system. If you have any questions about the work being done, do not hesitate to contact our office to get answers. Safety is our number one priority, so let's all do our part to keep our employees safe on the job.

At the December CWEC Board meeting, the Board of Directors approved our capital and operating budget for the new year. Included in the budget are projects to replace portions of underground primary cable as well

as overhead lines that have reached the end of their useful life. These upgrades will help improve reliability and keep outages to a minimum. Vegetation management clearing will be performed along our right-of-ways in parts of Portage, Shawano, and Marathon counties. As always, our focus will be to make improvements that enable us to better serve our membership and provide you with safe and reliable electric energy.

For anyone having difficulty paying an electric or heating bill this winter, I encourage you to reach out to resources that are available to help. Assistance is available through the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program in each of the counties we serve in Wisconsin. Please look for additional information on page 18.

Our Toys for Tots campaign concluded for 2024, and I cannot thank you enough for your tremendous support. We appreciate the help of our community businesses who participated and the support of our members who donated to the campaign. We helped approximately 1,200 area children receive toys through the campaign. Cooperatives support their communities, and it is a pleasure for CWEC to support our members in the communities in which they live.

We completed our annual financial audit the last week in January. We are audited every year by an independent Certified Public Accounting (CPA) firm to ensure we are recording all the co-op's activities correctly and in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP). The audit firm reports to the Board of Directors at their April board meeting each year. We had an unmodified opinion this year (that is a good thing; it means we did everything correctly).

Thanks everyone, have a great month!

## BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative was held at 7:54 a.m. on November 26, 2024. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The agenda, minutes of the October 31, 2024, meeting, new and terminated memberships, and the monthly safety and compliance report were approved.

### Action Items

- Monthly Financial Statements and Reports were reviewed by the Finance Committee.
- Board Policy 110 – Legal Representation and Use of Attorneys was reviewed. The wording in section 3G was changed from “president” to “Chairperson”.
- The Nominations Committee will interview candidates on Saturday, January 11, 2024, from 9 a.m.-11 a.m.

Operations and Engineering – Mr. Kurtzweil submitted a written report. Water heater LMR removal continues. Work continues at the Sannes Substation. Several meter seals were not properly installed by Allegiant. They will be sending another tech to change them out.

Accounting and Finance – Financial reports were presented by Ms. Clausen. The PCA for September was 0.00761. Progress continues in decreasing the number of manual meter reads. The 2025 budget was finalized and approved by the Board.

Member Services – Ms. Mazemke submitted a written report. Collection for the Toys for Tots program continues. There are 35 collection sites in our service area. This program runs through December 3, 2024. The Member Advisory Group has two members who have reached their term limit. Positions will be filled by April 1, 2025. One grant that CWEC has applied for is in the final stage of approval with the Department of Energy.

President and CEO – Lila Shower, CEO, reported on her submitted report.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.



The 2024 Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) Marine Corps Reserves Toys for Tots campaign provided toys to more than 1,100 area children. Toys for the campaign were obtained through toy and monetary donations from area residents, organizations, and businesses.

Toy donations were collected at more than 30 area businesses and schools in Birnamwood, Bowler, Clintonville, Iola, Manawa, Marion, Rosholt, Scandinavia, Tigerton, Waupaca, and Wittenberg. The monetary donations that were collected were used to purchase toys for the age groups that didn't have enough toys to fill requests. With those donations, roughly 3,100 toys, 625 books, and 1,000 stocking stuffers were distributed to area children. Those totals were on par with the numbers from the 2023 CWEC Toys for Tots campaign.

"Christmas is supposed to be a joyous time for families, but the financial situations some families face creates an extra burden for them around Christmas," said Bert Lehman, Toys for Tots coordinator and member relations specialist for CWEC. "Each year area residents, organizations, and businesses come together to help ease that burden for many families, and we are grateful for that help."

The toys were 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-Birnamwood School District), and western Shawano County (including Tigerton and Bowler school districts).

For more than 20 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 each Christmas. 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.

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

"In a span of only two weeks prior to Christmas, toy donations were collected, toys were purchased, and toy requests were filled, in an effort to make Christmas a little brighter for area children and families," Lehman said.



RE/MAX Lyons Real Estate in Waupaca collected a plethora of toys for the 2024 Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Toys for Tots campaign. Top photo: A portion of the Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative shop was filled with a bountiful of toys to be distributed to area children prior to Christmas.





1: The CWEC Toys for Tots campaign delivered a trailer full of toys to Waupaca County Department of Health and Human Services to be distributed to area children. 2. Employees at Bank First in Iola with the many donated toys that their customers donated to the CWEC Toys for Tots Campaign. 3. Employees of Premier Community Bank in Iola with the toys collected at its branch. 4. Donated monetary funds for the CWEC Toys for Tots campaign are used to purchase toys, with some of that shopping taking place at Fleet Farm in Waupaca.

# DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER



**Never break a meter seal.**



**Never open a meter base.**



**Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.**



**Contact Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative to have a meter seal cut or meter removed.**

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace. Use ENERGY STAR®-rated equipment, which consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life. Another way to save energy in your home office is to use efficient lamps for task lighting. Replace any older bulbs with energy-saving LEDs.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

# CHRISTMAS COLORING CONTEST WINNERS

The following children were randomly chosen for the top prizes for the Christmas Coloring contest hosted by Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative:

**First Prize:** Elsie Vanderkooy

**Second Prize:** Marcie Gagas

**Third Prize:** Waylon Skierka



Elsie Vanderkooy



Waylon Skierka

## ENERGY ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative’s Commitment to Community Program is designed to help households with their energy costs, including electric bills. For many Wisconsin households, energy costs place a severe and continuing stress on the family budget. To better serve our members, CWEC is part of the Wisconsin Home Energy Plus (HE+) program. This program is funded through public benefits and federal dollars to help eligible low-income households pay for home energy assistance and weatherization. Members may be eligible for energy assistance if they meet the HE+ program guidelines. Members should contact their local agency to determine eligibility.

For information about other energy assistance programs, visit [www.cwecoop.com](http://www.cwecoop.com). Under the “Billing” tab, click on “Energy Assistance” from the dropdown menu.



County	Agency	Telephone Number
Marathon	Energy Services, Inc.	715-842-3111
Portage	Energy Services, Inc.	715-344-5999
Shawano	Energy Services, Inc.	1-800-506-5596
Waupaca	Energy Services, Inc.	715-258-6820

## TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Scammers will try anything to deceive utility customers, including a tactic that claims customers have overpaid their bill. If you receive a call, text or email from someone claiming you overpaid a utility bill and need to provide your banking or credit card information to receive a credit, it’s likely a scam. In most cases, your utility will apply a credit to your account to cover future charges or refund an overpayment with a mailed check.

Source: *Utilities United Against Scams*



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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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#### District 3

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Allen Zander  
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715-630-8239

### Our Mission

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