



**Central Wisconsin
Electric Cooperative**
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



BALANCING DATA CENTER DEMAND AND RELIABILITY

Lila Shower, President & CEO

Data centers may feel like a big-city phenomenon, but more and more of them are showing up in rural communities like ours—and there's good reason for that. Rural areas offer what data centers need most: affordable land, room to grow, and access to transmission lines that can move large amounts of power.

What makes data centers different from other large businesses is their appetite for electricity. These facilities run 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Servers must stay online constantly, which means power needs to be reliable every minute of every day.

For electric cooperatives like Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC), powering data centers create both opportunities and challenges.

On the plus side, data centers have the potential to bring steady, long-term, load growth that helps support investments in the local grid. With proper planning and policy support, those upgrades — including new substations, stronger lines and smarter technology — could benefit all CWEC members and

help keep electricity rates steady.

But providing power to data centers presents challenges, too. These large facilities can be constructed and begin operating in as little as one year, but ensuring the necessary infrastructure, equipment, and electricity requires longer lead times and significant financial investment. Strategic planning and partnerships, as well as long-term power supply strategies are essential to the process.

While CWEC does not currently serve any data centers, co-ops nationwide are fielding requests and inquiries from tech companies, and we anticipate similar requests in the not-too-distant future.

As a member-owned cooperative, our responsibility is twofold: to listen to the communities we serve and to provide reliable, affordable electric service to all CWEC members. Balancing those responsibilities is not always simple, especially as new types of large-scale energy users, like data centers, become part of the local landscape.

No matter what the future holds, our priority will be supporting growth with

fairness — that means ensuring large-scale energy users pay their fair share, so residential bills don't spike and our local communities feel invested in.

The energy landscape is changing, and with it comes both opportunities and challenges. My commitment, and the commitment of CWEC's board and employees, is to continue listening, communicating and working with our members and community partners to ensure all decisions reflect the best interests of the people we serve.

If you have questions or concerns regarding data centers, your energy bills or any other co-op matters, we encourage you to stay engaged and reach out.

Your voice matters at CWEC.

I hope you've been able to enjoy many summer activities so far this year. One event you may want to attend is the Iola Car Show in Iola, July 9-11. It's one of America's best car shows with more than 2,300 show cars to view and a large swap meet for attendees to search through.

Have a great rest of the summer!

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative was held at 7:47 a.m. on April 22, 2026. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The agenda, minutes of the March 26, 2026, meeting, minutes from Officer Elections on April 9, 2026, 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 601 – Identity Theft Detection and Prevention. Recommendation from the committee was to forward the policy to the Attorney for review.
- Jim Halvorsen and Abby Schmidt from Clifton Larson Allen, LLP presented the 2025 final audit report.

Operations and Engineering – Mr. Kurtzweil submitted a written report. There is approximately another week of storm cleanup left. Work on the 153 Grant Project started on April 20, 2026. RESAP inspection took place on Monday, April 20, 2026.

Accounting and Finance – Financial reports were presented by Ms. Claussen. Ms. Claussen is working with NISC to upgrade the Meter Data Management for the irrigation TOU billing and testing the text messages that are being sent for outages.

Member Services – Mr. Lehman submitted a written report. Attendance at the 88th Annual Meeting held on April 9, 2026, was 309 with 224 being cooperative members. On April 14, 2026, the Operation Round Up Board approved \$3,550 in donations and approved 63 scholarships totaling \$22,500. The 2026 Toys for Tots campaign was approved.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Running multiple major appliances at the same time—like your dishwasher, laundry machines and oven—can spike energy demand and strain the electric grid, especially during peak hours (typically late afternoon to early evening). Instead of stacking appliance use, spread it out throughout the day or shift chores to off-peak hours when energy demand is lower. This not only helps improve overall efficiency but can also reduce your energy costs. A simple habit change, like doing laundry in the morning and running the dishwasher overnight, can make a meaningful difference for both your wallet and energy reliability.



LUCAS WAMHOFF: CWECC'S NEWEST LINEMAN



When Lucas Wamhoff was hired by Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWECC) as an apprentice lineman in early March, little did he know that two ice storms would hit the area roughly one month later, that resulted in an almost weeklong power restoration process.

Wamhoff said that week of restoring power was nerve-racking and hectic, but he assisted any way he could to restore power to CWECC members. And despite the 16-hour days, his goal to become a journeyman lineman was still strong.

Since his grandpa was an electric lineman, Wamhoff said he was familiar with the career, and when he was 18 years old, decided that was the career he wanted to pursue. Prior to joining CWECC, he said he worked for two different companies that electric cooperatives contracted work to. In addition, he was enrolled in school to work towards becoming a journeyman lineman.

CWECC contracted work to each of the contractors Wamhoff worked for, which allowed him to see firsthand how CWECC operates.

"We did contracted work here (CWECC) and I always liked the guys who worked here, and I thought it would be a good place to set some roots," Wamhoff said.

At the time he was hired by CWECC, Wamhoff lived in western Wisconsin. Moving to the CWECC service territory wasn't an issue for him, though.

"As long as I have my wife and my dogs with me, I can make home anywhere," he said.

Wamhoff said he likes the area that CWECC serves and is enjoying his time at CWECC.

"I like the way the co-op does things with building the system and trying to stay updated with all the newer technology," Wamhoff said.

Wamhoff is entering his fourth year of lineman apprentice school and is scheduled to take the test to become a journeyman lineman in the spring of 2027.

"I'm pretty excited to get the schooling out of the way," he said. "I still have a lot to learn yet. I'm always going to be learning through my entire career, but it will be nice to not have to take time off to go to school. I can just focus on everything here."

Outside of work, Wamhoff said he and his wife enjoy traveling.

SPENCER HAKES JOINS CWECC'S OPERATIONS TEAM



Spencer Hakes, who recently completed schooling at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, was recently hired by Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWECC) as a temporary employee working in the CWECC operations department.

With a goal of becoming a journeyman lineman in the future, Hakes said he is excited to be working at CWECC, as it is the first step of him

reaching his goal.

"Right now, I'm just learning everything that I can, trying to get to the next step," Hakes said.

He said he has been learning a lot in his short time with CWECC so far.

His days entail working on projects in the shop area and helping linemen perform tasks in the field, such as replacing power poles and helping with power restoration after storms.

"It's good to put stuff that I learned in school to actual real use and see how it actually works," Hakes said.

The experience Hakes is gaining at CWECC will help him in the future, he added.

"I think it will help me get a good start in this field," Hakes said. "It will help me learn a lot and get me ready for the next step. Just a great building block for my future."

He added, "I love this field of work, and I'd love to be able to run my own crew and learn all that there is to know about lineman work."

During his free time, Hakes said he enjoys hunting and fishing.





FOURTH-GRADE STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT ELECTRICITY SAFETY

To help promote Electrical Safety Month in May, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWECC) once again provided electricity safety demonstrations to fourth-grade students at elementary schools in the CWECC service area. Elementary schools included those located in Birnamwood, Iola, Rosholt, Tigerton, and Wittenberg.

The demonstrations were conducted by CWECC employees and showed students firsthand the dangers that could occur if they aren't safe around electricity. Students learned about some of the safety items a lineman needs to wear when they work around power lines. Students were also shown examples of what overhead and underground power lines look like, and why they are constructed the way they are. Linemen also showed the students what happens if a tree branch, kite string, and fishing line come in contact with a power line.

"With how dangerous electricity can be, it is the goal of the co-op to make students aware of that danger at a young age," said Bert Lehman, manager of Member Relations at CWECC.



CWECC Vice President of Operations Kevin Kurtzweil shows fourth-grade students at Birnamwood Elementary School the dangers of going near a tree branch or tree that has fallen on a power line.

"Oftentimes, smoke, sparks, and flames occur during the demonstrations, which helps to reinforce how dangerous electricity can be and why it is important to stay away from downed power lines."

One of the demonstrations used a hot dog to simulate what would happen if a human body contacted a power line.

"The reactions of the students when a hot dog touches the power lines during the demonstration and the flames that it causes draws the attention of the students quickly," Lehman said.

Finally, students were informed about what to do if they are involved in a vehicle accident that resulted in a downed power line. And if need be, how to properly exit a vehicle in that situation.

"Educating the public, including children, about the dangers of electricity is an important aspect of providing electricity to our members," said Kevin Kurtzweil, vice president of Operations at CWECC. "The students usually have a lot of questions for the linemen, which we encourage."



CWECC lineman Alex Lutz with the Rosholt Elementary School fourth-grade classes after demonstrating to them how to be safe around electricity.



Left to right: To help promote Electricity Safety Month in May, CWECC lineman Mack Yarbrough and CWECC Manager of Member Relations Bert Lehman demonstrate to fourth-grade students at Tigerton Elementary School how to be safe around electricity. Fourth grade students at Wittenberg Elementary School look on as CWECC lineman Chris Tuszke shows them that electricity can travel through a fishing line if it touches power lines. CWECC lineman Jarret Brow uses a hot dog to show fourth-grade students at Iola-Scandinavia School what happens if a human touches power lines.

ELECTRICITY SAFETY POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

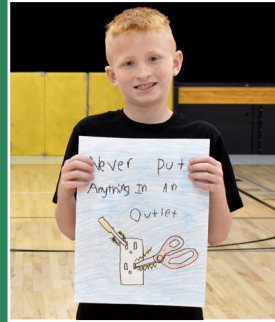
Congratulations to the top three third-grade students in this year's Electricity Safety Poster Contest sponsored by Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association. The judges had a difficult time picking the top three. Also, thank you to all the students who participated. Some of the posters submitted for the contest are on display in the lobby at CWEC headquarters in Rosholt.



First Place

Addelynn Sadogieski

Rosholt Elementary School;
\$25 prepaid debit card from
Wisconsin Electric Cooperative
Association (WECA) and a check
for \$25 from CWEC.



Second Place

Joshua Kurszewski

Rosholt Elementary School; \$15
check from CWEC.



Third Place

Lincoln Mele

Tigerton Elementary School; \$10
check from CWEC.



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Our Mission

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

UNRULY TREES AND POWER LINES: *We're on it*

We love trees. They beautify our landscape, provide shade, and are an essential part of nature.

When you see us out trimming trees, know that we are doing so to keep you safe and prevent service issues.

Too close for comfort

Although most trees do not present a problem, some of them grow into or crowd power lines or other utility equipment. When greenery becomes too close for comfort, we have to address it because overgrowth can interfere with power distribution and create a fire hazard.

Power lines can give off a spark or arc that may land on a nearby branch and ignite. Additionally, the lights in your house may flicker when tree branches brush power lines during high winds. Stormy weather can also cause limbs to break off and land on lines.

In fact, the majority of power outages are caused by tree-related issues. It is our job to ensure trees, branches and limbs are a safe distance from power lines.

Clear power lines make it easier and safer for lineworkers to access lines and fix problems that may occur. When clearing around lines, we make sure proper pruning techniques are used to preserve tree health as much as possible. Pruning is the first line of defense against unruly trees, although sometimes a tree must be removed. This is a last resort for certain scenarios: when a fast-growing tree is located directly under a power line or for trees that are leaning, in decline, or cracked or split.

In your own yard

When hiring someone to trim trees on **your property**, know that most tree-care workers are not qualified to work around energized power lines. By law, only OSHA-certified utility line clearance workers are allowed to work on trees or branches within 10 feet of a power line.

Contact Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative at 715-677-2211 with questions about trees around power lines.