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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

July 2023

PIERCE PEPIN
COOPERATIVE SERVICES

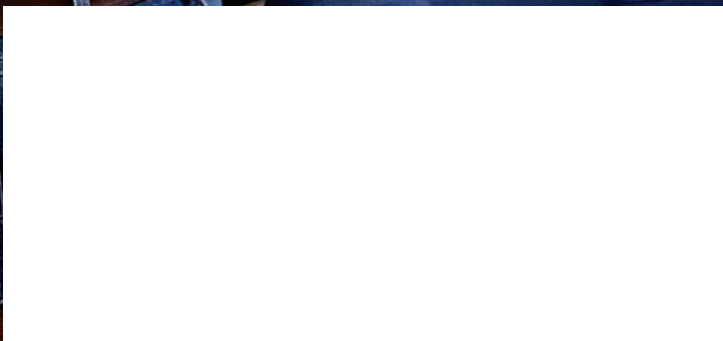
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



FROM PROBLEM TO PROSPERITY

CATASTROPHE CREATES OPPORTUNITY FOR
FIBER INTERNET ON WASHINGTON ISLAND

CHERRY RECIPES





REMEMBERING OUR FREEDOMS

Nate Boettcher, President and CEO

On May 12, I was returning home from a meeting with other electric co-op managers, and I was overcome with emotion. It was the day St. Croix County Sheriff's Deputy Kaitie Leising was laid to rest. If you are not familiar with the tragedy, Deputy Leising was killed in the line of duty while dealing with a potential drunk driver who shot and killed her while she was administering field sobriety tests.

I found myself along the procession route from Baldwin to Hudson on County Road N, and I witnessed an amazing display of support with people lining the route holding American flags and signs supporting Deputy Leising. Tears were streaming down my face, and I know that experience will have a profound and everlasting effect on my life. I continued pulling over several times to collect myself and take in the moment. That day is a reminder for us and our members that life can be short and to ensure that we do not take for granted the freedoms that we have.

At times, PPCS depends on our law enforcement for the safety of our employees. We are always thankful for their service and for ensuring that our employees feel safe. Throughout our employee group, we have many strong connections to law enforcement. I can

only imagine the stress and toll that these professionals and their families experience each day. I am grateful that our first responders serve our communities.

The Fourth of July is a reminder of our great country. Recently, a neighbor saw our American flag flying from our porch while walking by and said, "Thank you for flying the flag. Everyone should fly one from their home." This

Starting on July 10 through August 4, PPCS will select several winners to receive a flag that can be flown at your home.

got me thinking about what a simple reminder our flag is, and it is proof that we live in the greatest country on Earth. Our democracy is worth fighting for, but the flag also reminds us to take a minute to share compassion and empathy for our fellow Americans. Our neighbors need our support, our encouragement, and sometimes our hands to be lifted. The flag is only a representation of our country, but it's something that I wish we saw more of throughout our

communities. It's a visible reminder for all of us.

Starting on July 10 through August 4, PPCS will select several winners to receive a flag that can be flown at your home. Send us an email with your name and address to flag@piercepelin.coop, and we will enter you in the drawing. You can also call our office at 800-924-2133 to be entered if you do not have an email address.

The Fourth of July is filled with many great traditions. When I was a kid, it was the annual festival in Wakanda Park in Menomonie, Wisconsin. Before that, it was Rodeo Days in Mobridge, South Dakota. I am a big fan of fireworks shows, sunburns (not really), and barbecues with the family over the Fourth of July. Whatever your tradition, make sure you do it safely. Take a minute to reflect upon the reason we celebrate, and say thank you to all of those who serve their communities.

I will forever remember the outpouring of support for Deputy Leising, and I will continue to support our law enforcement officers each day. Part of our freedom is knowing that we have public servants who are entrusted to ensure our safety. We thank you for your service, and we wish all of you, our members, a great Fourth of July.



WE'RE LOOKING FOR YOU

DO YOU HAVE UNCLAIMED CAPITAL CREDITS?

PPCS is searching for members who have unclaimed capital credit (dividend) checks issued in 2018. Capital credits are a member's share of the cooperative's margins for a year in which revenues exceeded expenses. The amount a member is credited is proportionate to the member's share of electrical costs and purchases for that year. Capital credits are refunded as approved by the PPCS Board of Directors based on the financial health of the cooperative.

PPCS is required by its bylaws and the State of Wisconsin to publish a list of all capital credit checks not cashed or returned to our offices as undeliverable mail. Therefore, it is important to notify PPCS of your forwarding address when you move or change your address.

A list of the members we hope to locate is included on our website, www.piercepepin.coop, under My Co-op > Capital Credits. A notice of forfeiture of funds was also published in the June 7, 2023, edition of *The Journal* of Ellsworth. A current address is needed so we can locate these members and refund their capital credits.

Is your name on this list? Do you know where we can locate these people or their heirs if deceased? If you recognize anyone on the list, please contact us at 715-273-4355, 800-924-2133 or info@piercepepin.coop, and provide the member's name and current address.



If these members are not located by August 31, 2023, the unclaimed funds will be forfeited to the Federated Youth Foundation and used by the cooperative for educational or charitable purposes as directed by our bylaws.

PIERCE COUNTY FAIR GIVEAWAY

Enroll today: 800-924-2133

Chris Kroeze Concert

Four passes to the Pierce County Pre-Fair Event (Chris Kroeze Concert) on Friday, July 28 will be given away to members who are enrolled in or sign up to be enrolled in Operation Round Up®. Operation Round Up is funded by PPCS members who round up their monthly energy bills to the next dollar. A drawing will be held on Friday, July 21 at 4:00 pm to determine the winners. Tickets will be given away in pairs.

Only a few cents a month, so WE can give back to YOU!

OPEN HOUSE

Come celebrate our newly remodeled lobby!

WHEN: Thurs, August 3
TIME: 1:00 - 5:30 pm
WHERE: W7725 US Highway 10, Ellsworth, WI 54011

FREE ice cream sundaes!

Bring donations for our school supply drive for the chance to win a \$50 Visa giftcard.



RIGHT-OF-WAY CLEARING AND POLE TESTING BEGIN IN JULY

PPCS provides you with safe, reliable electricity. Although there are some things beyond our control that interfere—lightning, high winds, tornadoes, ice, and snowstorms—we work hard to prevent blinks and power outages. PPCS has contracted with Zielie’s Tree Service, Inc. to cut trees and brush in the rights-of-way of overhead power lines. Utili-Tech Solutions has been contracted to do pole testing to help maintain the integrity of the overhead infrastructure.

Clearing will begin in mid-July and include the towns of Troy, Clifton, Oak Grove, the western portion of River Falls, and Diamond Bluff. Pole testing will include the towns of Hartland, Salem, Isabelle, Maiden Rock, and the northern portion of Stockholm.

Contact our operations department at 800-924-2133 if you have any questions.

Current Information Helps Us Serve You Better

Have you changed your phone number or email address lately? Keeping your contact information up to date allows us to communicate effectively with you. Please notify us of any changes in name, property ownership, mailing address, phone, or email contact information.

Name changes are especially important. To protect your privacy, we can only discuss account information with the person whose name is listed on the account, or any other person authorized by the account holder. Situations that may prompt a name change to your account are marriage, divorce, death, or a change in bill responsibility.

Changes in the status of the property, such as from business to residential or dairy farm to residential, are also important to relay to us. These changes can impact the electric rate for your account.

Current account information is essential for the allocation and payment of capital credits, billing, and emergency/power outage situations. Update your account information by calling 800-924-2133 or logging in to SmartHub at www.piercepepin.coop or through our mobile app. Additional documentation and/or proof of identity may be required.



SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO MEMBER STUDENTS

Congratulations to our 2023 scholarship recipients! Students received either a \$1000 or \$750 scholarship based on an essay contest. Students whose parents or guardians are members of PPCS were eligible to compete. The scholarships are funded through unclaimed capital credits.



RAEANNA SMITH

Parents: Jeffrey and Wendy Smith
School: Ellsworth High School
Plans: UW-Madison - Legal Studies



CORA CAPATSKÉ

Parents: David and Krista Capatske
School: Ellsworth High School
Plans: Redlands Community College - Animal Studies



MABEL ROHL

Parents: John and Mackenzie Rohl
School: Prescott High School
Plans: UW-River Falls - Ag Business



MIKAYLA ANDERSEN

Parents: Travis and Kristen Andersen
School: Prescott High School
Plans: UW-Eau Claire - Nursing



DANIEL DEUTSCH

Parent: Mimi Doan
School: Homeschool
Plans: University of Northwestern - Computer Science and Finance



TROUT MAKE A SPLASH IN NEW PROGRAM AT ELLSWORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

By Isabella Lenz

Fifth-graders from Ellsworth Elementary School had the opportunity to experience science in action with Trout Unlimited's Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program; one of PPCS' newest employees, Keith Johnson, played a key role in making the experience possible.

Johnson helped introduce the program to the school after he learned about it from members at Trout Unlimited while attending the Kinnikinnic Pheasants Forever Youth Game Fair. He contacted the school's administration to gauge their interest in bringing the program to Ellsworth Elementary. After receiving their enthusiastic response, he began coordinating with the Ellsworth Community School District Foundation and

the Ellsworth Rod & Gun Club to get the program running. Johnson is also a member of the Ellsworth Rod & Gun Club, a group of sportsmen and sportswomen who support outdoor conservation efforts and education.

Both organizations helped provide funding for the fifth-grade class to participate in the program. A DNR hatchery supplied the classroom with over 250 trout eggs in November of 2022, and the students then raised the eggs until the trout became fingerlings. The fingerlings were released into the Trimble River on May 24, 2023. Lisa Bench, the lead teacher for the project, explained how the trout lived in the STEM lab at the school where the students were able to keep a close eye on the trout. At the end of the school year, students were set to release about 35 trout.

"I am currently teaching a unit on ecosystems where we compare a fish tank to a pond and look at animal interactions that include trout and their food as well as predators," said Bench. In addition, Bench was excited about the opportunity for the fifth-graders to experience a Bugs in the Classroom Program because of TIC, saying, "An entomologist came to school with his aquatic bugs, and the kids were able to observe and interact with them. It was so neat!"

The May 24 field trip to see the fingerlings released into the Trimble River included multiple activities for the students. Members from Trout Unlimited, Pierce County Land Conservation, Ellsworth Rod & Gun Club, and the DNR taught the students about insects in the river, fly fishing, and



The aquarium in the classroom where the trout were raised. At the top: Keith Johnson, PPCS technician, helps Tami Place, fifth-grade teacher, release the trout into the Trimble River.



other ecosystem-related material. Students also did art projects and learned to use compasses. The release day provided a fun learning experience for fifth-grade students and teachers at Ellsworth Elementary School, and now the program is set to be an integral part of the ongoing curriculum.

Johnson explained an advantage of the program is that once the initial equipment costs are out of the way, the program is relatively inexpensive. Equipment for the program included an aquarium, an aquarium kit (gravel, filtration system, air pump, air stone, water conditioner, and master water test kit), and a chiller to maintain a cool water temperature for the trout. Johnson also mentioned how TIC is expected to expand to St. Francis, Ellsworth’s Catholic school, and has already been adopted in nearby towns including River Falls, Prescott, and Amery.

“I’m just excited to be able to be a part of it, and to

actually get to go and see it,” said Johnson. He also wanted to thank the cooperating teachers as he knew about their dedication to checking in on the fish over the weekends when school wasn’t in session.

If you are a parent or caregiver of a fifth-grade student at Ellsworth Elementary School interested in supporting the program, you can plan to join the group next year on the trout release day (dates are TBD).



Right: Retta Isaacson (Pierce County Land Conservation) teaches students about aquatic insects. Below left: Mark Peerenboom teaches a student how to fly fish. Below right: Keith Johnson helps a student find insects on rocks from the river. Bottom left: Michele Bevis (Trout Unlimited) helps a student in the river.



SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

Help local students get the supplies they need for success in school

NOW THRU AUGUST 11TH

Drop off in the PPCS lobby



Casey Paider



Connor Romsos



Isabella Lenz

PPCS WELCOMES THREE SUMMER INTERNS

By Isabella Lenz

Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services (PPCS) recently welcomed three summer interns who will be learning and working alongside PPCS members and employees. The interns include Casey Paider, Connor Romsos, and Isabella Lenz.

Casey Paider attended Ellsworth High School and is currently pursuing a Business Administration and Analytics degree at Liberty University (Lynchburg, Virginia). Paider plans to find a full-time job once he graduates from college, and he hopes to continue running his epoxy flooring and detail companies. At PPCS, Paider is the cooperative business intern, and he completes tasks related to service orders, broadband, electric, bidding, service map locations, and analytics. Paider is also a member of the Rush River Trail Riders Snowmobile Club, and he enjoys racing motor cross, mountain biking, and professional hill climbing.

Connor Romsos attended Barron High School and earned a degree in Electrical Line Distribution at Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Romsos is looking forward to seeing what opportunities this

internship opens. At PPCS, Romsos is interning as a seasonal worker, where he aids the linemen in day-to-day activities and assures that the linemen are equipped with the correct materials and tools for the job. In his free time, Romsos enjoys hunting and fishing.

Isabella Lenz attended Prescott High School and is currently pursuing a degree in Scientific and

Technical Communication at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan. Lenz hopes to work as a graphic designer for a professional sports team once she graduates college. At PPCS, Lenz is the marketing and communications intern, and she helps with press releases, magazine articles, website updates, and managing and creating content for the PPCS social media sites. Lenz is a member of the Michigan Tech women's basketball team, and she enjoys hiking and photography.

Favorite meal of the day:

Casey – dinner
Connor – lunch
Isabella – breakfast

EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM

PERCE PEPIN COOPERATIVE SERVICES
Live Better.[®]
A Wisconsin Energy Cooperative

An innovative program about cooperative governance tailored for busy professionals.

Applications for the fall session are being accepted now.

Questions? Call 800-924-2133, ext. 150, or email info@piercepepin.coop.

Detailed information is available at www.piercepepin.coop/emerging-leaders-program



Get Smart About Home Lighting

One are the days when a simple flip of the switch was the only choice for illuminating our homes. While we still have this tried-and-true option, we've entered a new era of innovative and intelligent technologies, which includes smart lighting.

Smart lighting connects to Wi-Fi and offers an array of cutting-edge functionality and convenience. Let's look at the main benefits of smart lighting options.

Smart lighting is energy efficient. Most smart bulbs utilize LED technology, which is much more efficient than traditional incandescent lighting. Additionally, smart lighting gives you more control over how and when you light your home, ultimately resulting in less energy used for lighting.

Smart lighting provides convenience and control. Most smart bulbs can be controlled from an app on

your smartphone or can be paired with your voice assistant, like Amazon Alexa. You can conveniently control lighting settings from anywhere in your home or when you're away. Whether you want to set a schedule for lighting or adjust brightness levels, these smart options offer effortless control from the comfort of, well, anywhere!

Smart options empower you to personalize home lighting. Bright, warm, purple, green—whatever mood you want to create, smart lighting can help. For a more traditional look, try dimmable white bulbs. If you want to create the perfect ambiance for movie night, look for bulbs that can be adjusted for a variety of vibrant colors. The possibilities are endless.

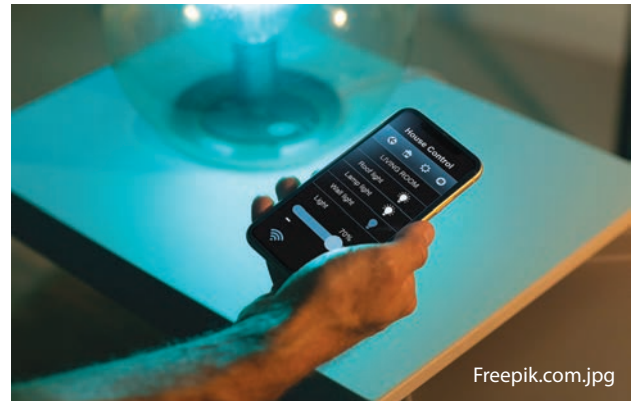
While smart lighting offers convenience and control, keep in mind your wall light switch will need to stay "on" for you to control the smart bulb from your phone or via voice command. To use a smart bulb, the wall switch it's connected to must be "on," so the bulb receives power, which enables it to connect to a Wi-Fi network.

If you need additional options to operate the lights, consider a smart light switch. Today's smart switches tend to play nicely with smart bulbs. If you want to control your smart bulbs with a physical switch (in addition to using your phone and voice commands), look for smart switches that include a built-in feature that allows both. Many smart

light switches include motion detectors as well.

If you're looking to take the plunge and integrate multiple smart bulbs into your home lighting system, your best bet may be a kit, like the Philips Hue Starter Kit. Most kits include several bulbs and any additional tools you'll need to get started.

If you're new to smart home tech and looking to start small, try a smart bulb in a high-traffic area of your home. It's also worth noting that smart plugs are a great starter option and allow convenient control of lamps or other lighting fixtures that are plugged into a wall outlet. Smart plugs are inexpensive and simply plug into your existing outlet.



Freepik.com.jpg

Electrical items that are connected to the smart plug can be controlled from a smartphone app, just like smart bulbs.

Whether you're looking for more convenience, colorful options, or better ways to manage energy use, smart lighting can provide multiple benefits. Determine which smart lighting features are most important for your needs, then start shopping!

SHIFT FOR SAVINGS

Reduce your energy use between 2 and 7 PM.

With your help, we can lower demand, keep rates stable, and decrease stress on the electric grid.

BROADBAND BYTES

Quick Updates from Fiber Freddie

Accounts Connected: 1641 Internet, 290 Voice

Customer Testimonial: After building their dream home and moving to the country, the Cernohous family experienced the “internet desert” many others have suffered through—even though they were just six miles from the city of River Falls. Lisa Cernohous works from home and very quickly discovered that adequate internet service was not available. Cernohous and her family faced the same struggles that many others have had when it came to making sure they had reliable internet service while trying to work and do school assignments from home



during the pandemic. Before connecting to SwiftCurrent’s service in December of 2022, it was nearly impossible for her kids to submit assignments, and she knew streaming wasn’t even an option. Cernohous went to great lengths to try and improve her previous service by borrowing hotspots from the public library and purchasing a booster that went on the roof of her house. With SwiftCurrent’s service, she no longer has to struggle to get high-speed, reliable internet service.




Cernohous explained how difficult it was for others on her road to access phone and internet service, as well. Her mother, who lives next door, would sit for over an hour trying to get a website to load, and the telephone company refused to install a “landline.” In addition, Cernohous recounted how one of her neighbors who lives down the road was having a medical emergency and had no cell signal, so “he drove himself to the top of the hill to get enough cell service to call an ambulance.” Cernohous convinced her mother to also get on the SwiftCurrent bandwagon.

Despite all the struggles Cernohous faced before connecting to SwiftCurrent’s service, she was happy to tell her story. “You’re crazy not to do it,” said Cernohous. “We’re just super thrilled, we’re so thankful, it’s perfect.”




Sign up for
SwiftCurrent Connect
today at
www.swiftcurrent.coop

PIERCE PEPIN COOPERATIVE SERVICES

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Power Outages and Emergencies: 800-927-5705

Nate Boettcher, President & CEO

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