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June 2023 **NEWS**

**PIERCE PEPIN**  
COOPERATIVE SERVICES

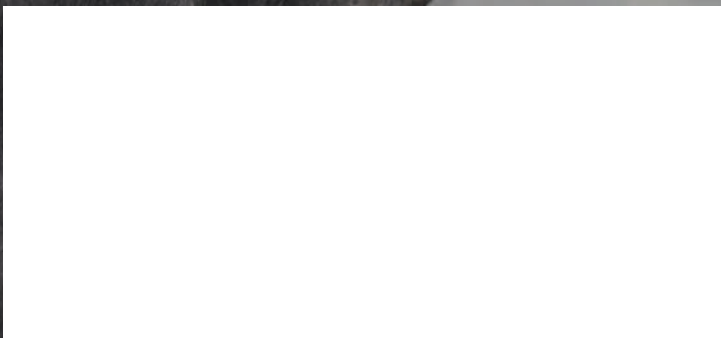
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

FOR THE LOVE OF  
**DAIRY**

TRANSFORMER RULE PAIN,  
LITTLE GAIN

KIDS AND CRITTERS

DAIRY DELICIOUS RECIPES





# EATING OUR OWN DOG FOOD

Nate Boettcher, President and CEO

**Y**ou may have heard the saying, “eating your own dog food.” If not, it’s a phrase that has been around for a while, often associated with companies practicing what they preach, or more simply put, do what you ask others to do. It’s a bit over the top to think that you might eat dog food, but the intent behind that saying is to encourage companies to utilize their own products or services even if it’s painful or hard.

Over the past three years, PPCS has been on the front lines promoting electric vehicles. In 2020, we purchased a Chevy Bolt, installed a charger in our garage, and utilized it as part of our vehicle fleet. You might say, we were trying to lead by example. However, I am not sure that anyone at PPCS really felt like we were all-in on the use of electric vehicles. Often, employees wouldn’t take the Bolt because it lacked range or there were concerns about where they might charge if they were attending a meeting on the cusp of its range. We’ve encouraged and promoted electric vehicles and we’ve even put up charging stations, but were we really “eating our own dog food?”

Well, that sentiment has started to change. With the addition of two new staff members who will be working in the field, we realized we were short of vehicles in our fleet. Our senior management team debated whether we should add another vehicle to the fleet. If so, what type of vehicle should it be and how would it be used? We decided it should be a transit van because we felt this might be the most optimal for the work that our technicians would be doing. Success — we found exactly what we were looking for and we were ready to purchase. That was until I asked the question, “Have we looked at purchasing the electric version?” The room silenced. My point to our team was simple: “It’s hard for us to be shouting to the masses

about purchasing electric vehicles, but then every time we go look for a vehicle, we buy a gas-powered version.” It was one of those inflection points for our staff and not because of what I said, but rather because of the realization that we needed to eat our own dog food.

We have purchased a Ford Pro E-Transit Van to add to our fleet. The total cost of the van was slightly less than the gas-powered one. Is it going to be perfect? No. We fully know this van will have limitations. We know that it’s not going to have the same driving range as a gas-powered engine and more than likely, there will be times when we will be limited in how we use it. However, our goal is to be leaders, to learn, and to be able to share our experiences with others. Our goal is to also ensure we utilize our resources effectively, meaning we expect to save money on fuel and maintenance costs.

At the same time, we have recently taken ownership of a Ford F-150 Lightning. It’s another vehicle that

we have added to our fleet to help reduce costs and save money. The range of the Lightning is 325 miles. To completely charge the battery, it will cost approximately \$20 of energy using our average retail rate or about \$40 for a range of 600 miles compared to a

gas-powered F-150 that costs nearly \$120 to fill the 33-gallon tank at today’s gas prices. Over the course of a year, that should save us around \$3,500 in fuel and an additional \$1,500 in

maintenance. Check out our latest Live Better podcast for a deeper dive into the first week with the Ford Lightning.

Our goal at PPCS is to be thought leaders promoting programs, services, and solutions that enable our members to Live Better. Electric vehicles aren’t a 100% perfect solution, but they are evolving quickly and will end up reducing the cost of vehicle ownership over time. Dog food doesn’t taste good, but I am glad our team recognizes that we can learn by doing and help to educate others.

Our goal is to be leaders, to learn, and to be able to share our experiences with others.



## PROJECTS TO INCREASE RELIABILITY AND COST SAVINGS CONTINUE



David Chavie, Energy Innovation and Operational Technology Manager

We began two large projects in 2022. The first was replacing all the PLC (powerline carrier) meters served by the Beldenville substation and a portion of the El Paso substation with RF (radio frequency) meters. We started 2023 with over 3,000 meters left to change out. There are just over 1,800 more

to exchange by the end of 2023. The next areas we will focus on are Glenmont, El Paso, Esdaile, Trenton, and Trimble.

The second project to replace 4,674 load control switches at members' accounts was launched in June 2022. Several hundred have been changed out, concentrated mostly in the Lund, Pepin, and Ella areas thus far. The purpose of this project is to replace the legacy load management system which is at its end of life. The new system will allow more local control by PPCS, two-way communications, and help shift demand to off-peak times which provides significant cost savings to PPCS and its members. Whenever possible, we will be changing out the load controller and the meter on the same visit.

PPCS will use methods like phone notifications, emails, and letters to notify members when crews will be working in their area. If you have questions about these projects, please contact me at 800-924-2133.



### PPCS SPONSORS YOUTH TO KAMP KENWOOD SUMMER CAMPS

PPCS will sponsor six campers, ages 8 to 14, to the Wisconsin Farmers Union Kamp Kenwood on Lake Wissota near Chippewa Falls. All camp and membership fees are paid by PPCS.

Children of PPCS members not sponsored in 2022 are eligible. Visit [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com) or call 800-272-5531 for more information. To register, contact the cooperative at 715-273-4355 (ext. 151) or [clubich@piercepapin.coop](mailto:clubich@piercepapin.coop).



## BROADBAND BYTES

### *Quick Updates from Fiber Freddie*

- Accounts Connected:** 1,432 active Internet accounts  
275 active phone accounts (SwiftCurrent can port an existing phone number or assign a new local one)
- Phase 2:** All of Phase 2 areas are currently open for orders.
- Phase 3:** Construction of the mainline has begun. In mid-May, Phase 3 was opened for orders with fall activation anticipated.

Online orders are the most efficient way to get on our installation list. Go to [www.swiftcurrent.coop](http://www.swiftcurrent.coop) to place your order today!



# ENERGY-SAVING PROJECTS FOR THE WEEKEND WARRIOR

**A**re you a weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a few project ideas for you—all of which can be completed in a day or less!

Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

## Get smart about home cooling and heating.

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with ENERGY STAR®-certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70!), this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere (from your phone), and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences.

Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat, and connecting it to your home Wi-Fi.

Play it safe: Remember to carefully read the installation instructions before you get started.

## Go green and boost your greenery with a rain barrel.

If you've got a green thumb, you already know that rainwater is the best water for your outdoor plants. Rainwater is free of minerals, salts, and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macronutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to harvest large amounts of rainwater and reduce home water use—it's a win-win. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually.

Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your needs.

The simplest way to install a rain barrel is to position a plastic or wooden barrel directly under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of your harvested water.

## Create fresh savings with a DIY clothesline.

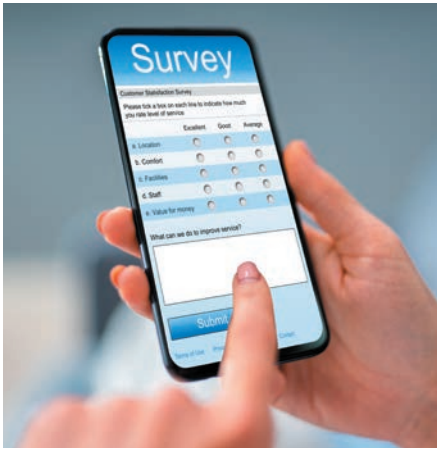
If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs in the summer, but you can also save on cooling costs since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home (which makes your air conditioner work harder). Additionally, air drying is much gentler on fabrics and will keep your clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

You can create your own clothesline with two T-posts, wire, and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of Quikrete to set the posts. Another option is installing a line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat! You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like [thespruce.com](http://thespruce.com) and [hgvtv.com](http://hgvtv.com) offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.

These are just a few simple ideas to help you save energy and money. So, get out there, roll up those sleeves, and tackle a few projects.





## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

*Your thoughts and opinions about PPCS help us serve you better*

As a cooperative member, you have a say in how your co-op is run. On June 12, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Market Research Services will begin conducting member satisfaction surveys.

The surveys will be conducted both by phone and email, but not everyone will be contacted. If you are contacted, we would greatly appreciate a few

minutes of your time to share your opinions of the cooperative. We strive to provide all members with safe, affordable, reliable, and clean electric service. By participating in the survey, you will help us make decisions that benefit you, your family, and your neighbors.

Thank you!

*All information is confidential.*

## RIGHT-OF-WAY WORK BEGINS MID-JUNE

Low-volume spraying will begin in mid-June. Our contractor will treat power line rights-of-way in the towns of Salem, Union, Maiden Rock, and Stockholm.

PPCS manages vegetation within its rights-of-way to ensure the safety of our crews and to protect electric service reliability. To accomplish this with minimal impact on our environment, we use both mechanical methods and herbicide applications. Low-volume herbicides will be applied to select vegetation using ATVs, backpacks, and truck-mounted sprayers—more direct, targeted methods.

PPCS will make every effort to contact property owners in person or by phone prior to spraying. If you have questions, please contact the cooperative.

In an effort to better serve our members, we're giving our lobby a facelift.

Please use SmartHub, Pay-by-Phone, mail, or our drop box on the west side of building to pay your bill during this time.

Members will be able to enter our building on the east (Highway 63) side. Please call 715-273-4355 to be admitted to the building.

**SHIFT FOR SAVINGS**

Reduce your energy use between 2 and 6 PM.

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

## PIERCE PEPIN COOPERATIVE SERVICES

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

**Office Hours:** Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**Power Outages and Emergencies: 800-927-5705**

## Nate Boettcher, President & CEO

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- District 2.....Edward Hass
- District 3.....Brian Berg
- District 4.....John Parkes
- District 5.....Ann Young
- District 6.....Ginny Huber, secretary/treasurer
- District 7.....Roger Wiff, chairman
- District 8.....Brian Bergsens, vice chairman
- District 9.....Daniel Reis