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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

August 2024



PIERCE PEPIN

COOPERATIVE SERVICES

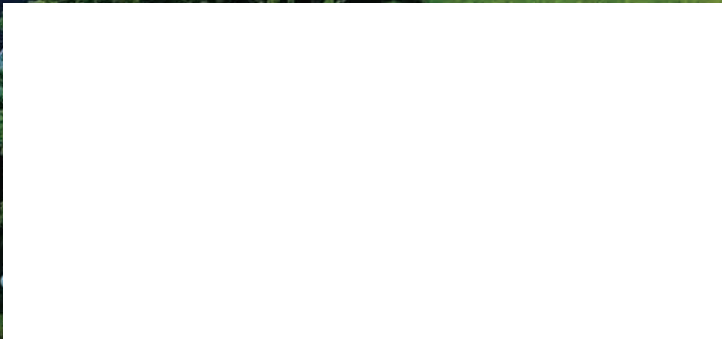
A Truist Energy Cooperative

**2024 FARM TECHNOLOGY DAYS
IS GROWING TO THE TUNE OF SUCCESS**

**QUANTUM LEAP:
THE NEXT INTERNET REVOLUTION**

BASELOAD VS. INTERMITTENT POWER

MUST HAVE MUSTARD





A NEW INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Nate Boettcher, President and CEO

This month's magazine shines a spotlight on the promising economic opportunities presented by data centers and Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI, once a distant dream, is now a reality, reshaping industries and propelling economic growth. For PPCS members, grasping AI's pivotal role in economic advancement can offer profound insights into how our community can flourish in this technological era, fostering a sense of optimism and hope.

In June, we welcomed The Metered, LLC as one of the first data centers in western Wisconsin. The Metered has worked closely with PPCS because of our competitive rates and high-speed fiber optic internet access. In the next few years, The Metered will be a significant load for our co-op, and we hope to see it continue to grow. Additional load is beneficial to all PPCS members. To say that

To say that we are open for business when it comes to data centers is an understatement. We have two highly critical elements of this business model—energy and great connectivity.

we are open for business when it comes to data centers is an understatement. We have two highly critical elements of this business model—energy and great connectivity. The data center will help power AI activities. A portion of this article was written using AI. If you are unfamiliar with AI and its impact, I encourage you to read on and learn a little more.

AI uses powerful computer models to help augment and supplement knowledge and aid problem-solving. AI's impact on agriculture is particularly relevant for our cooperative members. AI-powered tools can predict weather patterns, optimize planting schedules, and monitor crop health, leading to increased productivity and reduced waste. This means higher yields and more efficient resource use for local farmers. In manufacturing, AI-driven automation and robotics enhance production efficiency, reduce errors, and lower costs. This boosts the competitiveness of local businesses and creates new opportunities for high-tech jobs in our region. We are already using AI in our cooperative to help automate routine tasks. Adopting AI technology can make our local industries more resilient and innovative.

AI enhances productivity by quickly analyzing vast amounts of data, providing businesses with actionable insights.

Within our cooperative, AI can lead to better decision-making, optimized supply chains, content generation, and new market opportunities, which drive growth and profitability. Furthermore, AI stimulates innovation by enabling the development of new products and services. From personalized healthcare solutions to advanced financial services, AI-driven innovations create new markets and improve quality of life. This innovation generates economic value and opens new avenues for local entrepreneurs.

By embracing AI, our community can enhance operational efficiency, reduce costs, and stay competitive. Strategic AI adoption can attract new industries, foster economic development, and create jobs. Staying informed about AI developments and best practices is key to harnessing its full potential. But more importantly, take time to learn and use AI if you aren't already.

AI is a powerful catalyst for economic growth and personal and professional efficiency, and it will likely fundamentally shift how we live. Many people are skeptical, rightfully so, but the quicker you begin to adapt to this technology, the better you will understand how it can work in your favor. With the assistance of AI, writing this article took me five minutes; typically, I spend an hour or more writing each one. I will use the next 55 minutes to focus on other work. As technology leader Andrew Ng said, "Just as electricity transformed almost everything 100 years ago, today I actually have a hard time thinking of an industry that I don't think AI will transform in the next several years." Have a great August.



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PPCS MEMBERS BOOST LOCAL TOURISM THROUGH **AIRBNB HOSTING**

By Ryan Santo

Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services (PPCS) strives to support our local communities by encouraging economic development. Many PPCS members are doing their part to support the local economy by acting as Airbnb hosts and bringing tourists to our beautiful communities. There are around 20 Airbnb rental properties in the PPCS service territory. Three of these PPCS members shared their experiences as hosts with us.

The Swede Heir Farmhouse

Located in Pepin, lifelong dairy farmer Angie Bocksell became an owner of a new farm in 2020 and decided to renovate the extra house on the property and use it as a vacation rental on Airbnb. With few hotels in the area, this cozy farmhouse has become a popular retreat for guests nationwide. Angie's unique Airbnb offers a glimpse into a working farm once owned by the Barry family, who taught Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Bocksell says, "Tourism drives people to stay here." Guests visit for weddings, hunting, fishing, and Laura Ingalls Wilder tourism. The farm's charm is enhanced by the presence of cows, pigs, goats, and cats, which guests, especially children, adore. Bocksell genuinely cares about her guests and provides for them by offering effective communication, cleaning the property thoroughly after guests leave, and even recommending places to eat, places for outdoor activities, and local history while the guests are in town.

Bocksell's goal is to continue owning and renting the property and possibly pass it down to one of her children in

a few years. "I feel blessed to be able to share this space," she says. Overall, Bocksell has a beautiful place to stay with an average 4.97 rating on Airbnb, making it a guest favorite on the platform. The Swede Heir Farmhouse is open on weekends from May to November. Look up "The Swede Heir Farmhouse" on Airbnb.com to learn more!



Maiden Rock Barn

Another gem is Brenda Savaryn's Maiden Rock Barn in Maiden Rock. After hearing about Airbnb through friends and family, Brenda opened the lower level of her renovated barn in 2018 to share the area's beauty with wedding guests and tourists. Guests come here because of the setting, which is very quiet and peaceful. Her guests are diverse, with some coming from France and Brazil.

Savaryn's barn is very welcoming and she wants people to feel at home. She stays at the residence and is often outside gardening or spending time with her dogs when not working. She





provides good communication to her residents, and like Bocksell’s Airbnb, Savaryn has earned a 4.97 average rating on Airbnb, showcasing the barn’s appeal. The guests love the tranquility of the area and the friendly dogs that live upstairs.

Savaryn usually has groups of 3-4 stay at her place, and they are usually wedding guests or tourists. Some tourists know exactly what they want to do, but not all. Savaryn always sends write-ups to her guests about local recommendations such as sailing, biking tours, Crystal Cave, and golfing.

Savaryn plans to do Airbnb rentals as long as she can. In the future, she might even consider renovating the barn’s upper level to rent out. Savaryn says, “It’s been fulfilling, and I’ve enjoyed meeting a lot of different people.”

Savaryn’s Maiden Rock Barn is open year-round on Airbnb and Vrbo. Look up “Maiden Rock Barn” on Airbnb.com to learn more!



Samakya Cabins

Chris and Anna Kincannon, based in Pepin, own two distinctive rental properties: The Main Stay on The Bluff and The Potter’s Place. Driven by their dreams of running a bed and breakfast, they capitalized on Airbnb’s rise and purchased their first property in 2021. They recently completed their second property, The Potter’s Place, designed as an energy-efficient A-frame cabin.

The couple loves the area and is glad they could build here. They plan to continue building property on the 65-acre land they own and construct more places for people to stay. Anna says, “[Airbnb] is great; it provides lots of

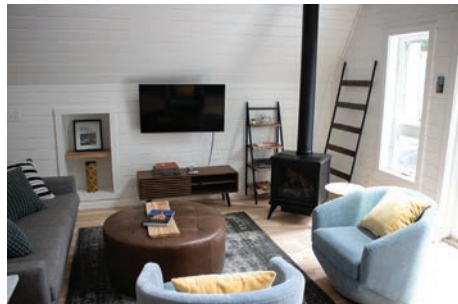
opportunities for families to travel together.”

The couple enjoys hosting wedding guests, girls’ weekend retreats, and families. They love sharing the area with new visitors, and guests often comment about how they enjoy the peace and quiet. The Main Stay on the Bluff has an impressive 4.94 average rating on Airbnb.

When guests arrive, they have a physical and digital guidebook at the property with a list of recommended places to check out while they’re



here. It includes kayak tours, sunset boat tours, and local dining options. The Kincannons’ properties, known collectively as Samakya Cabins, have a dedicated website, Instagram, and Airbnb listings. You can check out the website here: samakyacabins.com



With limited hotel and motel options in western Wisconsin, these PPCS members are playing an essential role in supporting tourism and economic development in our area.



By Ryan Santo

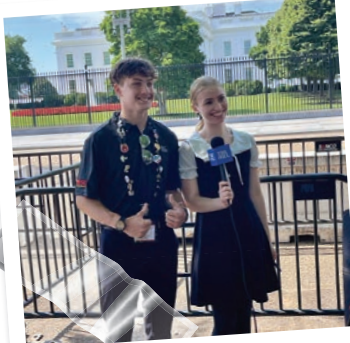


LOCAL STUDENT THRIVES AT YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE AND NATIONAL YOUTH TOUR

Each summer, Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services (PPCS) provides opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills and learn about the cooperative business model through participation in the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) Youth Leadership Congress and National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) National Youth Tour. PPCS sponsored Mya Petersen to participate in these events this year.

A Week in Washington, D.C. Eighteen youth delegates from 11 Wisconsin electric cooperatives, including Petersen, embarked on the 2024 NRECA Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Held from June 15-23, this event brought together future leaders around the state. Petersen described her week as eventful and educational, visiting historical sites and interacting with elected officials.

The week was packed with memorable experiences, from witnessing the U.S. Marines Sunset Parade and visiting the FBI building to having engaging conversations about renewable energy with legislative staff for Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson. The trip also included visits to iconic landmarks like the White House, Lincoln Memorial, Holocaust Museum, and Arlington Cemetery, culminating in a dinner and dance boat cruise with youth representatives from various states.





Youth Leadership Conference (YLC)

The Youth Leadership Conference, held annually in July, is a dynamic three-day event for high school juniors and seniors across Wisconsin. This year, YLC took place from July 16-18 at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The conference is designed to develop leadership skills and deepen understanding of cooperative principles.

Petersen was elected to the WECA Youth Board at last year's YLC conference. She decided to run because of her keen interest in learning more about co-ops. As a board member, she played a significant role in planning this year's YLC. Her responsibilities included organizing sessions and activities and ensuring the event would be educational and engaging. The preparation involved countless hours of planning and coordination with fellow board members and advisors, creating a memorable experience for all participants.



Preparing for the Future Petersen's involvement in the Youth Tour and YLC has significantly impacted her personal and professional growth. Meeting new people and networking have been vital, enhancing her leadership skills and reinforcing her commitment to community service and cooperative values. To prepare for the trip, Petersen created a cute, detailed journal to capture her experiences and reflections.

The Youth Tour and YLC provide unique platforms for students to learn about American history, government, and the cooperative movement. These life-changing experiences inspire young leaders to make a difference in their communities and prepare them for future roles.



Looking Ahead

Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services is committed to developing young leaders in our community. By sponsoring students like Petersen for the Youth Tour and YLC, we invest in the future of our cooperative and the communities we serve. Education and hands-on experiences are crucial for cultivating tomorrow's leaders.

For more information about Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services' youth programs, visit our website at www.piercepepin.coop, and click the My Community tab.

HAVE YOU MISPLACED SOME TREASURE?



PPCS is searching for members with unclaimed capital credit (dividend) checks issued in 2019.

A list of members we hope to locate is included on our website, www.piercepipin.coop, under My Co-op > Capital Credits. A notice of forfeiture of funds was also published in the June 6, 2024, edition of *The Journal*, Ellsworth. A current address is needed to locate these members and refund their capital credits. Please note that checks were only issued to members with over \$100 capital credit retirements or inactive accounts. Everyone else received the retirement as a credit on their energy bills.

Please contact us at 715-273-4355, 800-924-2133, or info@piercepipin.coop if you recognize anyone on the list and provide the member's name and current address. The unclaimed funds for any members not located by August 31, 2024, will be forfeited to the Federated Youth Foundation and used by the cooperative for educational or charitable purposes as directed by our bylaws.



GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE APPROACHING

The deadline for the October grants is approaching. Applications for Pierce Pepin Cares grants must be received by September 15, 2024, for review at the October Pierce Pepin Cares board meeting. Pierce Pepin Cares is funded by PPCS members who generously round up their monthly energy bills. Program information and applications are available online at www.piercepipin.coop under My Community.

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Phase 4 – Construction has begun in Pleasant Valley, and in-home installations began in mid-July in the Village of Elmwood.

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

NOMINATE A VOLUNTEER FOR THE LIVE BETTER COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Do you know someone who lives up to the seventh cooperative principle—Concern for Community—by helping others live better through volunteerism? PPCS created the Live Better Community Service Award to recognize individuals who selflessly give their time and talents. This award is presented to individuals who engage in community volunteerism, performing valuable services that benefit and improve the quality of life within the communities served by PPCS. The award, a \$100 Visa® Check Card, is presented to one individual in January, April, July, and

October. Nominations for the October award are due on September 15. Nomination forms and program details are available on our website, www.piercepepin.coop, under My Community.



Santa and Mrs. Claus (Mike and Deb Wilson) received the Live Better Community Service Award in December 2023.

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TRIMMING TREES NEAR POWER LINES CAN KILL

There's no other way to say it: Trimming branches or limbs near power lines can kill.

If you look the other way, get distracted by deciding which limb to trim next, or lose your footing, you could inadvertently contact a power line. You might think you have a steady hand, but moving a few inches off course could be the last thing you ever do.

It doesn't take direct contact with a wire to cause a fatal shock—electricity will jump to find the quickest path to the ground. Always keep yourself and your tools or equipment more than 10 feet away from power lines.



Did you know trimming within 10 feet (in any direction) of a power line is illegal? Only OSHA-certified line clearance workers are authorized to trim near power lines. So, when hiring a tree trimmer to trim near power lines in

your yard or on your property, make sure the person you hire is certified to do so.

Remember: Trimming trees within 10 feet of a power line can be fatal. Never trim branches or limbs near a power line. It's the law: Only OSHA-certified line clearance workers are authorized to trim near power lines.

Call us with any questions about trees and power lines at 800-924-2133. For more information about electrical safety, visit safeelectricity.org.

LOOK OUT FOR POWER SOURCES

- 10'** Do not get within 10 feet (in any direction) of a power line.
- Be aware of power lines when working on the roof.
- Do not trim branches or limbs near power lines.
- Be careful when carrying long or tall objects such as ladders or poles.
- 811** Before you dig, call 811 to have underground utilities marked.
- Do not dig near padmount transformers or other utility equipment.

Look up

DANGER HIGH VOLTAGE

Safe Electricity.org



Nate Boettcher, President & CEO
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