

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

June 2024



DAIRY DELICIOUS

UNRULY

SET YOUR HOME TO VACAY MODE

KIDS AND CRITTERS



FULL SWING OF SUMMER



Nate Boettcher, President and CEO

Every year it feels like once the annual meeting concludes, we jump right into summer. This year is no exception, but I should take a few minutes to recap. Our annual meeting was a success. We welcomed Leroy Clark as one of our new directors. Brian Bergseng has taken over as chair and was elected to another three-year term. Dan Reis won a competitive election and will serve another three years. During our annual meeting we took a moment to recognize outgoing chair Roger Wiff. The evening was capped off by a fireside chat with Green Bay Packer radio announcer Larry “Rock” McCarren. If you were unable to make the meeting this year, we encourage you attend next year.

Construction season is in full swing. We have crews working on doing

make-ready work for our Phase 4 fiber projects. Crews are working on upgrading service just outside of River Falls and near the Trenton substation. We will have several projects happening later this summer as well. By now, you are aware that road construction season is impacting much of our service area. We encourage you to be alert and watch for construction vehicles and our workers while driving. It will take a little longer to get to places, but please slow down and be aware.

Not only is summer a great time to get projects done for the co-op, but we also know that many of you are involved in projects around your home and business. Please “Call Before You Dig” and remember to look up while working around power lines. Many times, electric and fiber cables are where you least expect them. Not only is it dangerous to cut into one of these lines or hit an overhead line, but failing to call before

you dig or taking proper precautions can result in you paying for any damages.

Lastly, our team has been busy working on getting ready for the Phase 4 fiber buildout. This will include another 400 miles of fiber and pass by another 2,700 homes. Project schedules will be made available on our SwiftCurrent website, www.swiftcurrent.coop. If you are still thinking about signing up for service, we encourage you to do this soon. Whether you live in an existing area that has service or an area that is brand new, having your signup allows us to plan.

Please take a few minutes to ensure you follow us on social media. We would also ask you to update your contact information either through SmartHub or by calling the office. This helps us communicate important news and outages to you. We hope you have a great summer! Please stay aware and safe.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

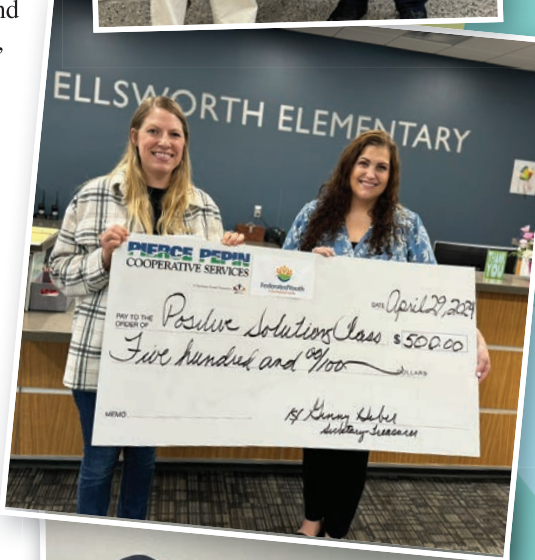
Your thoughts and opinions about PPCS help us serve you better.

On June 10, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s (NRECA) Market Research Services will begin conducting member satisfaction surveys. The surveys will be conducted 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. All information is confidential.



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 electric members not sponsored in 2023 are eligible. For more information, visit www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/youth-camp or call 800-272-5531. To register, contact the cooperative at 715-273-4355 (ext. 135) or bcupp@pierceppepin.coop.



OPERATION ROUND UP: SMALL CHANGE, BIG IMPACT

Thank you, Cooperative Members!

At the heart of every community lies compassion, and our cooperative members have exemplified this spirit through their participation in Operation Round Up® (ORU). By rounding up their monthly bills to the nearest dollar, our members contribute small change that collectively makes a big difference. These donations are pooled together to address unmet needs in our local communities. From supporting youth programs and education to enhancing public safety and emergency services, every penny counts. On average, participating members donate \$6 per year, with a maximum of \$11.88. These donations are distributed through the cooperative's charitable foundation, Pierce Pepin Cares.

In May, the Pierce Pepin Cares board of directors awarded \$500 grants to each of the following charitable organizations:

- Durand Fire Relief Association
- Healing Play Inc.
- Luke 3:11 Project
- Pierce County Historical Association
- Prescott Fire Dept.
- River Bluff Humane Society

Additionally, the board approved the following grants funded by the Federated Youth Foundation:

- CVTC Foundation – \$2,100
- Friends of the Ellsworth Public Library – \$2,000
- Positive Solutions Class – \$500
- Community Safety Net – \$960

Thank you, cooperative members, for turning small change into meaningful change. Together, we're lighting up lives and building a stronger, more compassionate community. If you're not participating in Operation Round Up, sign up today by calling 800-924-2133 – be part of something big!



BRADBURN JOINS PIERCE PEPIN COOPERATIVE SERVICES AS CFO

Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services (PPCS) welcomed Becky Bradburn as its vice president of finance and chief financial officer on April 22. Bradburn is an industry veteran with a wealth of knowledge and experience in the electric cooperative industry. She joined PPCS after recently working at Bandera Electric Cooperative just outside San Antonio, Texas, where she held a similar role.



Bradburn and her husband, Doug, have two children, Cassidy and Joe, and a 2 1/2-year-old granddaughter, Anna. She

is very hopeful that Cassidy and Anna will be able to make the move from Texas to Wisconsin soon. Her son, Joe, is in the Navy and is currently going through the Navy Diver Selection Program. In her spare time, Bradburn loves waterskiing, golfing, reading, and gardening. She and Doug are happy to be closer to family and friends, especially their mothers, who each live about three hours away now.

“We are excited to have someone of Becky’s caliber join PPCS,” said PPCS President and CEO Nate Boettcher. Boettcher added, “Becky has a solid understanding of cooperative accounting, financial management, and strategy. They also invested in broadband at her previous co-op, which will greatly benefit PPCS and our membership.”

BROADBAND BYTES

Quick Updates from Fiber Freddie



Accounts Connected:

3258 active Internet accounts

697 active Phone accounts (SwiftCurrent can port an existing phone number or assign a new local one)

Phase 4: Our contractors, TD&I, have begun construction in the Elmwood area.

Online orders are the most efficient way to get on our installation list. Go to www.swiftcurrent.coop to place your order today!

FIBER INTERNET

elevates your experience

ENJOY A HIGHER LEVEL OF SPEED AND RELIABILITY

With fiber internet from SwiftCurrent Connect, everything becomes elevated. Your download and upload speeds go up. The reliability of your connection goes up. And your online experience — whether streaming, gaming, working, shopping, or socializing — goes up.

Don't settle for the same old internet with lower speeds and lower reliability. After all, you don't need tech troubles bringing you down. Upgrade to one of our fiber internet plans today with speeds up to 2 Gigs and 99.9% reliability.

CALL 715-350-7033 TO UPGRADE TO FIBER INTERNET

Service availability will depend on location. Contact us for details.



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ENERGY SCAMS UNMASKED

Utility scams target consumers with water, gas, and electricity connections. In today’s digital world, every swipe and click increases the risk of potential scams. Scammers have adapted their tactics to trick unsuspecting consumers through various methods. Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services (PPCS) wants to help you avoid energy scams, whether a financial loss or a leak of your personal information.

Scammers typically disguise themselves—either physically or digitally—as utility employees or representatives to steal consumers’ money or personal information. A common trick is to claim a consumer’s bill is past due and threaten to disconnect service if payment isn’t received immediately. Scammers approach consumers through a variety of means, including phone calls, text messages, emails, and even in-person visits. However, the digital line of attack is increasingly more common.

Spotting a Scam

There are several red flags you can watch for to identify an energy scam.

Scammers often use high-pressure tactics to create a sense of urgency, like claiming your electricity or other services will be disconnected if a payment isn’t made immediately. Additionally, scammers may ask for unusual payment methods such as gift cards or cryptocurrency. If someone is pushing for an unusual payment method, it’s likely a scam.

You’ve probably noticed that many digital scams, such as emails or text messages, include poor grammar, spelling errors, and odd email addresses. These are red flags, so when you see these dodgy forms of communication, consider it a potential scam.

What PPCS Will (and Won’t) Do

PPCS will never demand immediate payment and threaten to disconnect your service without prior notice or warning. We strive to resolve challenging situations and work with our mem-

bers to avoid disconnects. PPCS will never ask for your Social Security number or banking details over the phone or through email. We offer several secure payment options, including in-person, mail, drop box, scheduled payments, SmartHub, and pay-by-phone.

Avoiding Scams

Whether in person, over the phone, or online, always be suspicious of an unknown individual claiming to be a PPCS employee requesting banking or other personal information. If you’re ever in doubt about a potential energy scam, give us a quick call at 800-924-2133 so we can assist. PPCS wants to help protect you and our community against utility frauds, and by notifying us about potential scams, you can create the first line of defense. We encourage you to report any potential scams so we can spread the word and prevent others in our community from falling victim.

SIGNS OF AN ENERGY SCAM

- High-Pressure Tactics**
Scammers will pressure you, creating a sense of urgency. Claims that your power will be disconnected without immediate payment are common with utility scams.
- Sketchy Payment Methods**
Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. In these cases, it’s likely a scam.
- Dodgy Communication**
Whether an email, text message or letter, utility scams typically include poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. These are common warning signs of a scam.



Nate Boettcher, President & CEO
Liz Gunderson, Editor

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