

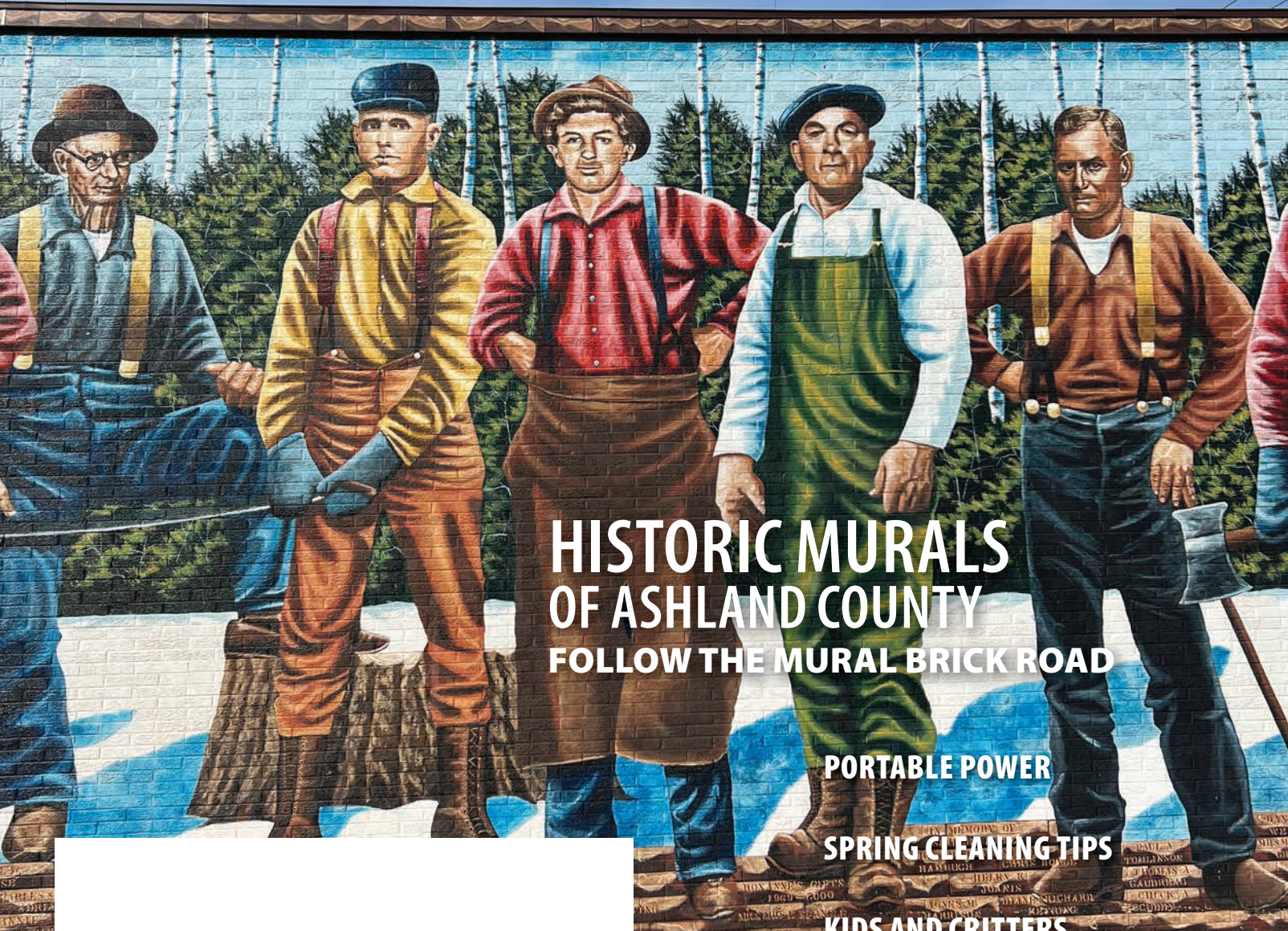
Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

March 2024

PIERCE PEPIN
COOPERATIVE SERVICES

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

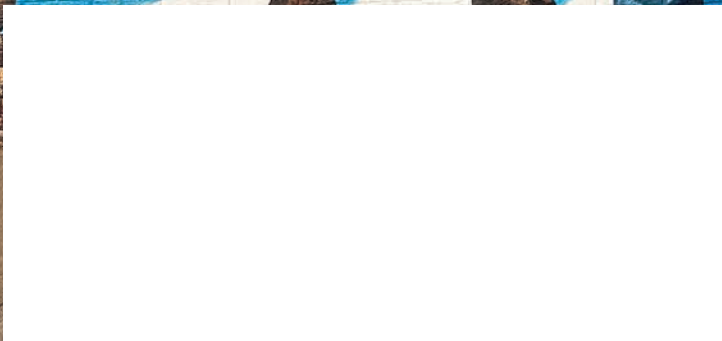


HISTORIC MURALS OF ASHLAND COUNTY FOLLOW THE MURAL BRICK ROAD

PORTABLE POWER

SPRING CLEANING TIPS

KIDS AND CRITTERS





GEARING UP FOR *Spring*

Nate Boettcher, President and CEO

I'm enjoying another 50-degree day in February as I write my monthly article. My children recently played outside for about five hours in their spring jackets, never complaining about being cold. I've worn summer polos to work more times in the last two weeks than I can count. And we are dealing with road bans in February. I want to get my lawn mower blades sharpened, do lawn work, and make sure the garden tools are ready to go. But I must remind myself that as eager as we are to gear up for spring, we still have a few weeks left where winter may return, and I don't want to jinx myself or any of you. So, my snowblower stays ready, the shovel is in the car, and I am still carrying around my stocking hat and winter gloves, just in case.

As we exit winter, there are a few reminders. First and foremost, our annual meeting will be on April 18. We have a great program lined up for you this year, and we will have some great news to share about the co-op as we close out a tremendous 2023. On that note, we have a couple of proposed bylaw changes. One change cleans up some outdated language regarding other services that PPCS has been involved with over the years. If approved, these changes would update the bylaws but wouldn't change anything day to day for the co-op members.

The second bylaw amendment does impact our members. The bylaw change, as approved by the board of directors, would change the number of districts from nine to three. There would still be nine directors, each district having three directors and three directors elected each year. Over the last few years, finding members interested in running for the board has become more of a challenge. In some cases, we have had interested members, but they shy away from running against an incumbent. By having three districts, we would have more members eligible to run in those districts. If there are more than three individuals running in a district, the top three candidates receiving the most votes will be elected. This change would go into effect after the current election.

Information about both proposed bylaw changes are included in your election materials that will be mailed to every member in mid-March. Full copies of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws and the proposed amendments are available on our website at www.piercepepin.coop/board-directors. If you have questions about the proposed amendments, please call our office.

Spring is a reminder to check your surroundings when

...we will have some great news to share about the co-op as we close out a tremendous 2023.

working around power poles and overhead lines. Please take a few extra minutes to look up, around, and call before you dig. This has become especially important with fiber being installed across our service area. Even if you "think" you know where your lines are buried, call Diggers Hotline at 811. It potentially could save your life.

Lastly, as a reminder, your most recent billing statement included a charge for demand (kW). Our new rates contain a charge for your peak kW between 5 and 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. Our power supply costs are typically higher during weekday afternoons. Your efforts to reduce your energy use during this time saves the cooperative money on wholesale power costs, which inevitably impacts your monthly bill. We've had several good questions come in on this change. It's worth noting that an overall rate increase had to occur to make up for the over 6% rate wholesale power increase. The new demand charge better aligns our costs with the wholesale market. Even if we hadn't added a demand charge, rate increases would have occurred. Over the next few months, look for more information on additional options regarding rates as we look to give our members flexibility. Happy Easter, and enjoy this great weather!

- + SwiftCurrent Tools
- + Streaming Options
- + Internet for Daily Use
- + Tips for Internet Beginners

TECHNOLOGY 101

 February 28 - 5:30 PM at PPCS Office
 March 6 - 10 AM at PPCS Office
 April 10 - 5:30 PM at Kinnickinnic Town Hall

Registration is required.
 Use the QR code, call 715-350-7033,
 or go to www.swiftcurrent.coop/training.





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PROJECT TO EXCHANGE OVER 9,500 METERS COMPLETED

There was elation in the PPCS office the day the last meter was exchanged in the years-long project to update the AMI metering system. Since 2022, PPCS crews worked to get the last 5,000 meters replaced. Over 3,000 meters were replaced in 2023, the project's final year.

AMI stands for Advanced Metering Infrastructure. It refers to a system that enables two-way communication between a utility company and its customers' meters. Traditional meters only measure the total consumption of electricity over a period of time. In contrast, AMI meters provide detailed information on usage patterns, allowing for more precise billing and better management of resources.

Overall, AMI systems offer numerous benefits to cooperative members by giving them more control over their energy usage, improving

billing accuracy, enabling faster outage response, and facilitating participation in energy efficiency initiatives.



Spring is here, and there is no better time to put energy efficiency into your landscaping plans. Planting trees in the right areas improves energy efficiency by providing shade in the summer and warm sunlight in the winter. Also, remember to put safety first and call 811 before you dig to identify all underground utilities.

Plant Trees Safely

Before you dig, call 811 to locate buried utility lines.

LOW TREE ZONE

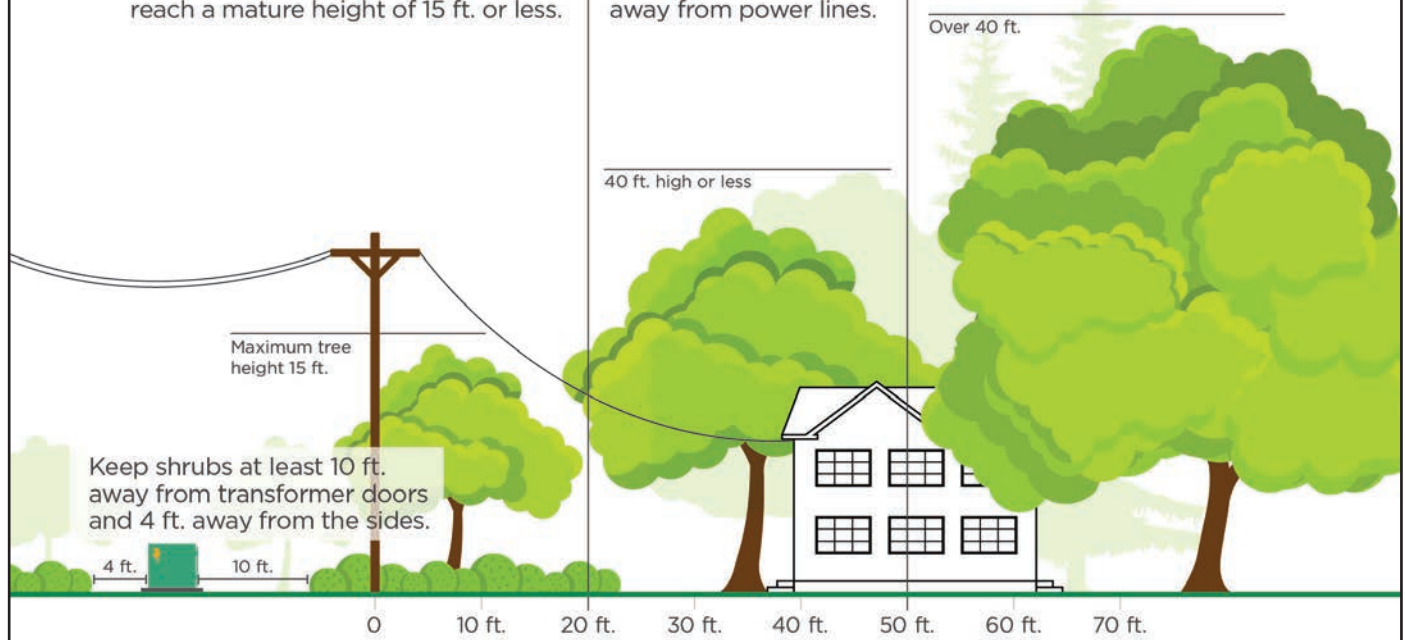
Avoid planting within 20 ft. of power lines. If planting is unavoidable, only plant shrubs and small trees that reach a mature height of 15 ft. or less.

MEDIUM TREE ZONE

Plant medium trees (under 40 ft. when mature) at least 25 ft. away from power lines.

LARGE TREE ZONE

Plant large trees (over 40 ft. when mature) at least 50 ft. away from power lines.





PPCS MEMBERS MAKE GRANTS TO LOCAL NON-PROFITS POSSIBLE

Pierce Pepin Cares awarded \$3,800 in grants to four local non-profits in February. These grants were made possible by PPCS members participating in Operation Round Up® and rounding up their monthly energy bills. Individually, members contribute just a few cents each month, but collectively, these donations provide significant support to local non-profits. An additional \$2,000 grant was awarded to Friends of the Spring Valley Library using Federated Youth Foundation (FYF) funds. The FYF is funded through abandoned capital credits.



Karen Meyer (left) received a \$1,000 grant on behalf of the Salvation Army for emergency utility assistance from Charity Lubich (right), PPCS vice president, member relations and human resources, and Barb Bee, PPCS senior accountant.



Barb Bee (center), PPCS senior accountant, presented a \$2,000 grant from the Federated Youth Foundation to Emily Kovach-Erickson, president of Friends of Spring Valley Library, and Katie Schneider (right), library director, to purchase computers.



Ellsworth High School was awarded \$800 to assist in providing breakfast for students during the Promo Fair. Pictured from left to right are Anne Pechacek, Becky Lane, Rob Heller, and Charity Lubich, PPCS vice president of member relations and human resources.



The Assistance and Resource Center (ARC) accepted a grant of \$1,000 for general operating expenses. Pictured left to right are Judy Perkins, Sharon Shulze, PPCS Senior Accountant Barb Bee, Cindy Testa, and Peter Carr.



Kim Johnson (left), executive director of Basics for Local Kids, received a \$1,000 grant for the purchase of kids' winter wear. Pictured with Johnson is Charity Lubich, PPCS vice president of member relations and human resources.



One Member. One Vote.

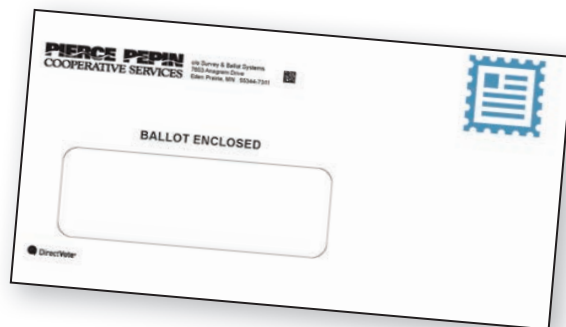
WATCH YOUR MAIL FOR VOTING MATERIALS

Democratic member control is one of our core cooperative principles. You have a voice in how your electric cooperative business runs, and you can exercise that right by voting for representatives on the board of directors and proposed bylaw amendments.

Voting materials will be sent to every member in mid-March. You will receive an envelope with the words “Ballot Enclosed” printed on the front. The mailing includes director candidate

biographies for districts 7, 8, and 9, proposed bylaw amendments, an annual meeting registration card, and a mail-in ballot.

There are multiple ways you can participate in voting: by mail, electronically through SmartHub, using the web address directvote.net/PPCS, or by attending the annual meeting where you can meet the candidates and then cast your vote. No matter how you choose to participate, we encourage you



to use your voice and vote!

The election results will be announced at the annual meeting after the voting has taken place. Members who vote by any method will be entered in a prize drawing for one of five \$200 gift certificates to purchase a tree.

Join us!

87TH ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, April 18 | Ellsworth High School
Registration & Meal 5:00 PM | Business Meeting 5:45 PM

One Member. One Vote.
That's the power of cooperative membership!

**Members who attend the annual meeting will be entered in our December prize drawing for three \$100 bill credits.*



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Follow us on Facebook, X, and Instagram

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

Power Outages and Emergencies: 800-927-5705

Nate Boettcher, President & CEO

Board of Directors

- District 1.....Gerald Drier
- 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 Bergseng, vice chairman
- District 9.....Daniel Reis