

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

November 2024



PIERCE PEPIN
COOPERATIVE SERVICES

A TruStone Energy Cooperative

**A YARN ABOUT SIEVERS
RENOWNED FIBER ARTS SCHOOL
KNITS PEOPLE TOGETHER**

UNIMAGINABLE

**SMART HOME TECH
ON A BUDGET**

KIDS AND CRITTERS





GET OUT TO VOTE

Nate Boettcher, President and CEO

On November 5, US citizens will head to the polls to vote in national, statewide, and local elections. We encourage every one of our members to get out and vote. Pierce, Pepin, and St. Croix counties had significant voter turnout in the last presidential election. Over 80,000 voters participated in 2020. We encourage you and all community members to get out and vote once again.

As a nonpartisan entity, we do not promote any political party. However, it's fair to say that PPCS has important federal and statewide issues. Below is a list of items that are important for the co-op.

- 1. Electricity reliability.** PPCS supports policies that ensure the electric grid's reliability, including support for renewable, nuclear, and existing baseload generation. Policies that put our electric grid at risk or reduce reliability are not in members' best interest.
- 2. Electric vehicles.** PPCS continues to support the development of both hybrid and plug-in electric vehicles. The opportunity for drivers to utilize energy overnight when demand is low provides a benefit in overall carbon reduction from the transportation sector.
- 3. Broadband support.** PPCS supports continued support for rural broadband development. We discourage our congressional leaders from halting any programs that allow rural members to have access to high-speed, reliable internet.
- 4. Housing.** Affordable rural housing continues to be an issue for our rural communities. We support legislation



that promotes affordable housing, encourages home ownership, and allows working families to own housing.

- 5. Rural Economic Development.** We support statewide initiatives to attract new businesses, encourage business growth, establish programs to meet the economy of the future and create more jobs in our service area.
- 6. Energy strategy.** We believe that energy is a critical and essential part of our lives. We believe both sides of the aisle must work together to ensure stability, moderate the cost of energy, provide energy security, and ensure that we develop a sensible across-the-board framework for ensuring that our energy generation, supply, and transmission do not become disrupted.

These are important goals and policies for our co-op. We have worked hard with members on both sides of the aisle to ensure our policy goals are met. It's important to note that no matter which candidates are elected, we will work on your behalf to ensure cooperatives are represented in Madison and Washington, D.C. I encourage you to take this opportunity to vote and assist those who may be unable to

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drive themselves to a polling center. No matter the outcome, we will wake up on November 6 Americans who can build a great country for our future.

From my family to yours, I hope you have a wonderful November. Thank you to our veterans, and have a great Thanksgiving!



A SPIRIT OF SERVICE

PPCS Apprentice is Dedicated to Serving our Nation and our Community

Tucker Ingenthron, an apprentice lineman at Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services (PPCS), exemplifies the spirit of service and dedication both in his military and civilian roles. As a proud veteran, Ingenthron has seamlessly transitioned his commitment to protecting and serving his country into a steadfast dedication to his community. His experiences in the Minnesota National Guard have instilled in him a profound sense of duty, resilience, and teamwork, which he now channels into ensuring the reliability and safety of our community's power supply.

Following his grandfather and uncle's examples, Ingenthron enlisted in the National Guard in October 2011, when he was 18 and a high school senior. The following summer, he attended boot camp at Fort Leonard Wood and then went on to Advanced Individual Training as a combat engineer. He was a carpenter for the Guard while serving in Montana. Ingenthron now serves with the Minnesota National Guard, B-Company, 334th Brigade, Engineer Battalion (Red Bulls). Recently promoted to Staff Sergeant, Ingenthron's current enlistment will end in 2029, and he anticipates re-upping for a short period to achieve a full 20 years with the Guard.

He was deployed to serve in Afghanistan from September to May, in 2013-14. His unit's main focus was route clearance – clearing all the primary and



secondary roads of IEDs (improvised explosive devices) to create safe delivery routes. This was dangerous work, and Ingenthron suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) when one of the IEDs exploded under his vehicle. He received the Purple Heart because of the injury. He still has some lingering effects from the TBI and experienced PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) after returning to the States. However, he sought out help from a behavioral health specialist, and these symptoms have all improved.

Ingenthron is a third-generation lineman, following his father and grandfather into the field. His father

moved up through the ranks in electric cooperatives and retired as the General Manager of Marias River Electric Cooperative in Shelby, Montana, last June. Ingenthron began his lineman career late – at age 30. He anticipates receiving his journey license in 2027. “Being older and having status as a leader in the Guard has been a big asset,” said Ingenthron. “It has given me the ability to think outside the box and find solutions.”

“Electrical work is a brotherhood,” said Ingenthron, “very similar to the type of brotherhood you feel for the other soldiers in your company.” The





leadership skills he has developed in the Guard have been an asset out in the field with the other line workers. Ensuring everyone goes home safely at the end of the day is always the priority. Ingenthron hopes to continue growing in his role at PPCS and taking on more responsibilities once he achieves journeyman status.

Ingenthron’s journey from the military to the electric cooperative highlights the invaluable contributions of veterans in civilian sectors, showcasing how their skills and values continue to benefit society.

Thank you, Tucker, for your dedication to our nation, our cooperative, and our members.



Our Commitment to Community program offers additional help to PPCS members who qualify for energy assistance through the county where they reside. Program assistance is provided on a first-come, first-served basis, so don't delay if you need help. To get started, contact your county's Department of Human Services.

Pierce, Pepin & St. Croix Counties 715-598-4750
Buffalo County 608-685-4412

Meeting Your Payment Obligation

Please contact us if you are having trouble paying your monthly energy bill. We are happy to work with you, but you must contact our office to set up a payment agreement.

LOAD MANAGEMENT TEST FOR DUAL-FUEL ELECTRIC HEATING

Wednesday, November 20

Load management receivers for dual-fuel electric heating systems will be tested on Wednesday, November 20, from 6:55 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The test will ensure that our load management system works properly before the winter heating season begins. Examples of dual fuel heating systems are electric resistance heat, air-source heat pumps, and ground-source heat pumps.

This load control test is performed before the winter Full Load Control season to ensure member familiarity with the control sequence and to validate that backup heating systems function properly. During the test, backup heating systems should operate while the dual-fuel electric heat is cycled off if your home heating system is actively heating.

This test will not affect other controlled loads such as electric water heaters, electric thermal storage (ETS) heat, agricultural or commercial loads, or electric vehicle chargers, which may be controlled under routine load management procedures.

Before the test, postcards will be mailed to load management program participants with dual-fuel heating systems. If you have questions about the program, please contact our Energy Innovation team.



GOVERNOR VISITS TRENTON SOLAR ARRAY

Governor Tony Evers stopped in Hager City on Monday, September 23, as part of National Clean Energy Week, to visit Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services' (PPCS) new solar array, Trenton Solar at Truttmann Field. The 2-megawatt array can produce enough electricity to power 525 homes. Using 12 acres of land, the array includes more than 4,000 bifacial panels, each 550 watts, that operate with an axis tracking system to follow the sun and maximize generation.

PPCS partnered with the Wisconsin Office of Energy Innovation, OneEnergy, and West Cap on the project so that a portion of the renewable energy from the Trenton Solar at Truttmann Field benefits the cooperative's lower-income members.



Happy Thanksgiving

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 We're **thankful** for the opportunity to help you Live Better®.
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BROADBAND BYTES

Quick Updates from Fiber Freddie

Accounts Connected:
 Internet: 3,589 Phone: 775

Important Note:
 We cannot guarantee service and activation before year-end for any service order taken after September 30, 2024. We will strive to complete every service order in hand; however, we will prioritize those currently in the queue due to the changing seasons and the volume of current service orders. If the drop line is not placed before frost, your service order will be held until we resume work in spring 2025. For more construction information or to sign up for service, visit www.swiftcurrent.coop.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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