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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

February 2025



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COOPERATIVE SERVICES

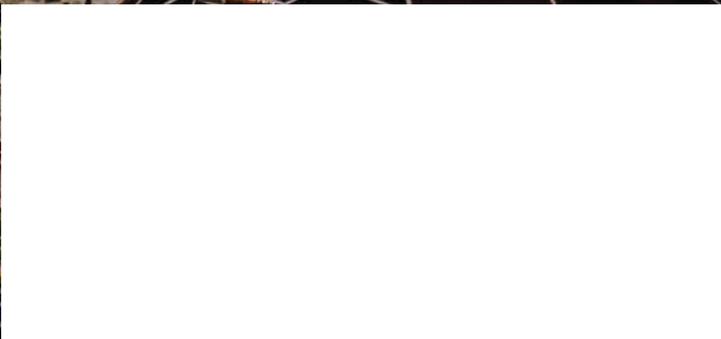
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

MILTON HOUSE MUSEUM
BRINGS UNDERGROUND
RAILROAD TO LIFE

POSTCARD CALL TO ACTION INSIDE

BILLION DOLLAR BILL

KIDS AND CRITTERS





2025 ENERGY RATES AND PRIORITIES

Nate Boettcher, President and CEO

As I sit down to write this February column on the cusp of the New Year, I'm filled with optimism about what 2025 holds. At the same time, I feel a sense of urgency—my editor, Liz, is waiting for this article to finalize the publication for our members. The year ahead promises exciting opportunities and significant challenges, with energy policy likely taking center stage in our state legislature and at the national level. Stay connected with us either electronically or by reading the monthly magazine Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News; there is always a lot of good information shared.

Several articles in this month's magazine discuss the Right of First Refusal (ROFR), pronounced as "RO-FUR." ROFR is being sought in Wisconsin to allow incumbent transmission providers the ability to have a first chance at building new transmission projects. Simply put, ROFR allows existing Wisconsin companies to employ Wisconsinites to build, maintain, and manage these large projects and ensures that future revenue from these transmission projects stays with Wisconsin companies like Xcel, Dairyland Power, ATC, and others. Cooperatives are asking for your support in passing this legislation.

Nationally, cooperatives through our co-op association, NRECA, are walking a delicate line, ensuring that federal programs such as the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act remain in place. Both programs have committed millions of dollars to electric cooperatives and broadband service providers to help rural Americans. At the same time, cooperatives have raised strong concerns about reliability, especially considering the amount of baseload generation closures that have occurred more rapidly than anticipated. Our electric grid is constrained during peak periods; we need Congress to continue funding energy projects, finish permit reform, develop pro-nuclear policies, and find a balance during this transition.

Lastly, in December, your board of directors reviewed the wholesale power costs and anticipated member rates for this

next year. Our overall wholesale rate declined from previous years **due to our efforts to help us reduce peak demand and the addition of several large new loads being served by the cooperative.** Nearly 60% of our power bill is still directly attributed to your demand use (energy demand or kW) on peak days in each of the four seasons. We had a great summer season last year, partially offset by temperate days but also by the reduction that our members provided when we called upon

Our overall wholesale rate declined from previous years.

you to help us control costs. We can continue this trend over the winter and next year by reducing our demand further. Something as simple as waiting to wash or dry clothes during these periods can reduce your demand by 2–3 kW or the equivalent of \$200 worth of annual energy costs if you lowered your demand (kW) throughout the year.

We don't expect you to live in the dark during these periods, but minimizing your demand use will help all of us.

To further support this, we've made updates to our demand-based rate structure. For smaller general-purpose rates (GP-S), members now have a monthly allowance of 3 kW. Regular general-purpose rates (GP) include 6 kW, and larger general-purpose rates offer 9 kW. Your demand charge is based on your highest peak usage between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. By reducing consumption during these hours, you can minimize your demand charges. Members participating in load control programs also receive a \$5 monthly credit. Strategies such as controlling water heaters help reduce system peaks and lower wholesale costs. We will continue to use these to help lower annual wholesale power costs.

We're excited about what's to come in 2025 and will continue to share updates through our social media channels and monthly newsletters. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to working together to create a more sustainable and reliable energy future. Have a wonderful February!

ARE YOU HAVING DIFFICULTY PAYING YOUR ENERGY BILL?

PPCS' Commitment to Community program offers energy assistance to low-income individuals or families who are electric members of PPCS. If you need assistance, you can apply online at <https://energybenefit.wi.gov/>. The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) assists with heating costs, electric costs, and energy crisis situations.

For more information on WHEAP, call 1-866-HEATWIS (432-8947). Qualifying members will receive a credit on their PPCS utility bill. Contact our billing coordinator at 715-273-4355, 800-924-2133, ext. 104, or info@piercepepin.coop if you have additional questions.



2025 WORK PLAN FOCUSES ON RELIABILITY

Maintaining our electric distribution system is the most critical and costly component of providing safe, reliable electric service. We have one new construction/conversion project in our power delivery plan for 2025. This project is essential for service reliability—reducing service interruptions, increasing load capacity, and cutting line losses in electricity distribution. The 2025 project will include the following:

- Trenton Township—Replace .75 miles of overhead line along Highway 35 with underground due to the increased load, age, and condition of the existing line.
- Trenton Township—Replace 2.8 miles of existing overhead along 230th Avenue and County Road VV with new overhead line. This is due to increased load, age, and condition of the existing line.
- River Falls Township—Replace 1.5 miles of existing single-phase overhead line with three-phase overhead. This is due to additional loading in the area.

PPCS is also working on a grant for grid resilience (GRIP). If approved, the following projects need to be completed in two years:

- Pepin Township—Replace 1.2 miles of existing three-phase overhead line with new three-phase overhead line. This is due to age, condition, load, and a crucial tie between substations.
- Frankfort Township—Replace 1.7 miles of overhead line with underground. This project involves removing lines from trees along the route, bringing areas back to the road, and upsizing the wire to stabilize voltage.
- Pepin Township—Along Bogas and Foster Roads, replace 2600 feet of non-accessible overhead line with 3700 feet of underground line to eliminate accessibility and vegetation issues.
- Frankfort Township—Replace 1.5 miles of non-accessible overhead line through farmland and wetlands with underground cable along the road. This is also due to its age, condition, and conductor size.
- Waterville Township—Replace 1.8 miles of non-accessible overhead line along the road with underground. This is due to accessibility issues,

farmland, and wetlands, as well as the wire size and condition of the 1950s-era line.

- Trenton Township—Replace non-accessible overhead lines through wooded areas with underground along 730th Street. This will eliminate cutting and spraying of some right-of-way.
- Upgrade breakers in Lund substation to electronically controlled breakers.
- Upgrade breakers in the El Paso substation to electronically controlled breakers.
- Install a SCADA system to better manage the flow between substations and monitor substation loading.

In addition to these projects, the work plan and budget also includes:

- Annual replacement of failing underground cable.
- New service installations and upgrades.
- Pole changeouts and transformer replacements.
- Vegetation management and clearing will focus on Eau Galle, Gilman, Spring Lake, El Paso, Rock Elm, Salem, and Union townships, covering 161 miles of line. We will spray in the Troy, Clifton, western River Falls, Oak Grove, western Diamond Bluff, and Ellsworth townships, covering 147 miles of line.

PPCS is an authorized dealer for the sales and installation of Generac generators. With a new generator, you will be prepared to weather any storm! To learn more, call our energy innovation team today at 800-924-2133.



DID YOU KNOW?



WRAPPED IN SAVINGS

Ensuring your home is properly insulated can improve energy efficiency and make it more comfortable. Insulation acts like a cozy coat that reduces heat loss during winter and a protective layer that reduces

heat gain during summer.

Many older homes have less insulation than newer homes, but even newer homes can benefit from additional insulation. While it's not the least expensive efficiency improvement, adding insulation and air sealing your home can provide the biggest bang for your buck in energy savings and overall comfort.

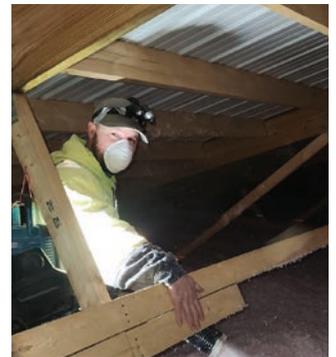
The most common areas to insulate are attics, ceilings, crawlspaces or unconditioned basements, exterior and interior walls, floors, and ductwork located in unconditioned spaces. The amount and effectiveness rating of insulation required for each area varies by climate, but many websites, like the Department of Energy or Home Depot, provide easy-to-follow recommendations. Visit energy.gov/insulation to learn about recommended R-values for specific areas of the home based on climate zones.

It's essential to understand how insulation effectiveness is measured. Insulation is rated in R-value, which measures the

material's resistance to conductive heat flow. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating effectiveness. The R-value you'll need depends on factors like climate, heating and cooling system type, and which area of the home you plan to insulate.

Insulation is available in a wide range of materials, from bulky fiberglass rolls to cellulose made from recycled paper products. If you're considering installing additional insulation, talk to an expert who can offer guidance on the right materials for your budget, climate, and comfort needs.

Investing in proper insulation for your home enhances comfort and reduces energy consumption. Contact our energy experts at 800-924-2133 to discuss potential energy efficiency rebates that can help lower the costs of these improvements.



Scholarships Available

for high school seniors graduating in Spring 2025.

Learn more at www.piercepepin.coop/scholarships-student-contests.

Applications due by February 15, 2025.



DIRECTOR DANIEL REIS: A LEGACY OF DEDICATION AND SERVICE ON THE PPCS BOARD



Daniel Reis was re-elected to his final three-year term on the Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services (PPCS) board in April 2024. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Reis determined he could not complete his three-year term and submitted his resignation to the board in January. His tenure on the board has been marked by dedication to

the cooperative’s mission and a genuine passion for serving the members of PPCS. We are grateful for his contributions and commitment to our cooperative.

Reis was first elected to the board in March 2015. He brought a wealth of experience and a deep understanding of the cooperative principles that guide our organization. His thoughtful decision-making has been instrumental in steering PPCS through numerous challenges and opportunities. One of Reis’ most notable achievements on the board was as a member of NRECA’s 2020-22 Director Advisory Group (DAG). “As an educator and lifelong learner, Dan was a regular and reliable contributor to our director’s education and conference discussions,” said Patrick Mangan of NRECA. Always eager to assist in piloting new course ideas on electric vehicles and cybersecurity, Reis also contributed to drafting a job description for co-op directors, which has been a valuable resource to many co-ops.

In January 2016, Reis went to Washington, D.C., for the New Director Orientation offered each year, and upon his arrival, the city was immediately shut down (and the orientation canceled) for what was one of the largest blizzards in D.C. history. Reis made his way to the Westin Arlington Hotel only to find that most of the staff had been sent home. A “little snow” (20 inches) did not stop him from enjoying three days in an empty hotel, braving the storm to find food in the few neighborhood restaurants that remained open until airports

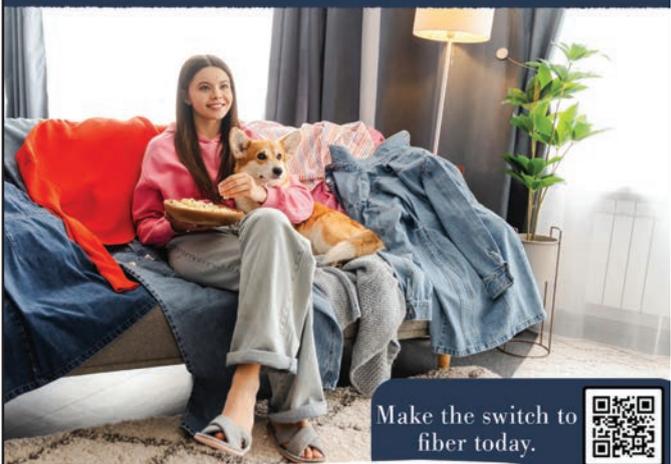
reopened and he could travel home. “After that experience,” said Mangan, “it was clear that Dan had what it takes to serve on an electric co-op board!”

Reis eventually completed his New Director Orientation and achieved the highest level of director certification through NRECA. Reis’s service on the board has always been characterized by integrity, transparency, and a genuine concern for the well-being of others.

“We sincerely thank Dan for his exceptional service and unwavering commitment,” said Brian Bergseng, board chairman. “His legacy of leadership and dedication will be remembered and cherished by all who have worked with him.”

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