

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

May 2025



PIERCE PEPIN

COOPERATIVE SERVICES

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

FORAGE FOR FUN AT THE MUSCODA MOREL MUSHROOM FESTIVAL

COOPERATIVE FAMILY FUND

TIPS TO BEAT THE ENERGY PEAK

BEEF RECIPES



REMEMBERING A FRIEND, MEMBER, AND DIRECTOR

Nate Boettcher, President and CEO



In March, our former director, Dan Reis, passed away after a short but courageous battle with brain cancer. Dan served as a director for 10 years on the PPCS board. Dan was one of the original nine directors that hired me in 2019. This month's article and magazine are dedicated to Dan and his legacy, which he leaves behind. Prior to Dan joining the board of directors, he was a high school educator and teacher. He taught technical education in Hudson. Dan graduated from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF) with an agricultural technical education degree and received a master's degree from St. Mary's University in Minnesota.

Dan was a kind soul. He was passionate about education, noting that we were all lifelong learners and saying several times, "Even as a director, I am constantly learning," followed by his trademark, "You know what I mean?" Prior to my interview with the board of directors, I had noted Dan's past. My family is full of educators, and some of my closest friends are shaping the minds of our youth today. It came as no surprise during the interview when he asked, "Nate, what are your thoughts about sending every kid to a four-year college?" I don't recall my exact response, but I think I said something to the effect of, "Well, I think four-year schools are great, but they are not for everyone. There are a lot of technical degrees and trade schools that prepare our youth to enter the workforce and contribute to society in meaningful ways." Dan responded, "The world needs people who work with their hands, too."

Although I never had the chance to witness Dan's workshop or see his work up close, I am aware that he was a phenomenal craftsman with the ability to create some impressive works of art. I am sure his family can attest to his skill set, and maybe some of you have received one of these pieces.

Just last April, Dan and I traveled together to Washington, D.C., to participate with our fellow electric co-ops across the country, informing our legislators about key issues. We sat at the table with Rep. Van Orden and met the staff of Senators Johnson and Baldwin. During these visits, we tried to take complex topics and distill them into short talking points. During one of these visits, I was fortunate to lead the discussion. After finishing and fielding questions, I looked over at Dan. He had a smile on his face that said it all. He was happy to be there, happy to support our co-ops, and proud of the work PPCS does on behalf of our members. He dropped me off at home after we returned and said, "I'm really proud of the co-op, and I'm thankful to be part of something bigger than me.....you know what I mean?"

This same message came out just a few weeks before Dan passed away. Former Board Chair Roger Wiff and I visited



Dan at his home as he began hospice. We presented Dan with a plaque recognizing his accomplishments on the PPCS board, along with his Gold Credential Training Certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), our national co-op partner organization. Achieving this certificate level reaffirms Dan's lifelong commitment to learning. During this visit, Dan commented several times about being proud of the co-op and how he was so thankful to be a part of the co-op investing in broadband. I noted that just a few feet away, his son was able to work remotely while caring for his dad. This is another example of how Dan transformed his community.

Dan was a friend, a cherished director, and a lifelong member of the cooperative. Dan's contributions to the co-op will be felt for a very long time. As a result of his commitment to learning, we have renamed the scholarship program to the "Dan Reis Memorial Scholarship." This program provides scholarships to high school students and will be another piece of Dan's legacy and his commitment to education. I am humbled by our staff's commitment to name an important part of our co-op after him. Dan's support for education, his service to the co-op, and his warm smile will be missed by all of us. Rest in peace, our friend, member, and director. Your spirit will always be with us.

CALLING ALL CAMPER!

PPCS will sponsor six campers, ages 8 to 14, to the Wisconsin Farmers Union Kamp Kenwood on Lake Wissota near Chippewa Falls, Wis. All camp and membership fees are paid by PPCS.

Children of PPCS electric members not sponsored in 2024 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. 151) or clubich@piercepipin.coop.



Youth Leadership Conference

FREE event for high school students.
July 15 - 17, 2025 at UW-Stout
Details and registration information at www.piercepipin.coop/youth-programs.



Memorial Day
REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE SACRIFICED

Office closed: Monday, May 26
Report electric outages through SmartHub or call 800-927-5705.
Report internet issues by calling 866-307-5326.

UNDERGROUND INSPECTIONS BEGIN IN JUNE

With warmer weather, PPCS takes the opportunity to do many projects to maintain our system. We have contracted with Karcz Utility Services to perform underground cabinet inspections, which include clearing, cleaning, and testing. Inspections will be completed in Oak Grove township. If you have questions about this work, please contact our operations department at 715-273-4355 or 800-924-2133.



BROADBAND BYTES

Quick Updates from Fiber Freddie

Accounts Connected:

Internet: 4,015 Phone: 376

Construction Update: Line construction is underway in Pepin County, the villages of Maiden Rock, Pepin, and Stockholm. As soon as the main line construction is completed, we will begin drops to residences and businesses. The summer installation schedule is filling up quickly. Sign up for internet and voice service today at www.swiftcurrent.coop.





International Year of Cooperatives

Cooperatives Build
a Better World

Graduating seniors from high schools in the PPCS service territory were invited to submit essays for our Dan Reis Memorial Scholarship contest with the chance to win \$1,000 scholarships. Winners of the scholarships will be announced in May at their schools' awards ceremonies. The number and quality of the essays submitted for the contest this year was outstanding. The following essay is an example of the excellent work submitted by the students. As we celebrate the International Year of Cooperatives, it highlights the essential qualities that cooperatives bring to our communities.

THE VALUE OF COOPERATION



Jeanne Rohl

Jeanne is a senior at Prescott High School and submitted this essay for the 2025 PPCS Scholarship Contest.

Cooperation is a cornerstone of progress, a unifying force that has fueled achievements across industries and personal endeavors. One such field where cooperation is essential is the electric cooperative industry, exemplified by Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services. By delivering reliable energy to communities and empowering individuals, Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services embodies the principle that collective effort leads to shared success. In my own life, cooperation has been the foundation for significant achievements, including winning a state championship in softball, two state championships in golf, being a member of the basketball team, and serving as president of the student council and vice president of the National Honor Society. These experiences have underscored the transformative power of working together to achieve goals that surpass individual capacities.

Electric cooperatives like Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services are founded on the principle of working collaboratively to

meet the energy needs of their members. Unlike investor-owned utilities, cooperatives prioritize the well-being of their members rather than profit. This member-focused approach is evident in Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services' commitment to reliable service, affordable rates, and innovative solutions for energy efficiency. For instance, Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services actively engages its members through programs such as SmartHub, which provides real-time information on energy usage and renewable energy initiatives that align with sustainability goals.

One key lesson from Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services' operations is the importance of shared responsibility. Every member has a voice in the cooperative, fostering a culture of inclusion and collective decision-making. This democratic model ensures that the needs of the many are addressed equitably. In essence, Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services thrives on the same values that drive successful teamwork in any setting: trust, communication, and a shared vision.

The importance of cooperation became clear to me during my journey to winning a state championship in softball. Softball is a sport where individual brilliance can only go so far; it's the synergy between players that leads to victory. My team's success was built on mutual trust, strategic communication, and the willingness to put the team's goals above personal accolades.

My teammates' ability to back me up in the field gave me the confidence to perform at my best. However, our success extended beyond technical skills. We spent hours practicing together, celebrating small victories, and learning from our losses. This collective effort created an unbreakable bond that carried us through challenging games and ultimately to the championship.

This experience mirrors the cooperative efforts of Pierce Pepin Cooperative

Services. Just as my team's success depended on each player fulfilling their role, Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services relies on the collaboration of its members, employees, and board of directors to achieve its mission. Whether maintaining the grid during a storm or implementing new technologies, Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services exemplifies how collective effort yields resilience and progress.

Although golf is often seen as an individual sport, my journey to winning two state championships demonstrated the hidden teamwork involved. Golf tournaments require players to support one another emotionally and strategize collectively during team competitions. My teammates and I shared insights on course conditions, encouraged each other during tough rounds, and celebrated our collective victories.

One memorable moment came during a particularly challenging state tournament. After a difficult first round, my teammates and I gathered to analyze our performance and share advice. The next day, our collective determination paid off, and we turned the tide to secure the championship. This triumph was not just a result of individual skill but of the camaraderie and mutual support that defined our team.

In the same way, Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services collaborates with other cooperatives and organizations to overcome challenges and deliver value to its members. For example, partnerships in renewable energy initiatives enable Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services to diversify its energy portfolio and reduce costs. These collaborations reflect the essence of the cooperative model: achieving more together than any individual entity could alone.

Serving as president of the student council and vice president of the National Honor Society further reinforced the value

of cooperation. In both roles, I had the privilege of leading teams to plan events, implement initiatives, and address the needs of our school community. These experiences taught me that effective leadership is not about issuing directives but about fostering an environment where everyone feels empowered to contribute.

One of my proudest accomplishments as student council president was organizing all of our meetings, pep fests, community, and school outreach programs that exceeded all expectations. The success of these events was due to the collective effort of students, teachers, and community members who rallied together. Similarly, my role in the National Honor Society involved collaborating with peers to organize blood drives and coordinate service projects. These initiatives demonstrated how pooling resources and talents can create meaningful change.

Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services' emphasis on member engagement mirrors these leadership lessons. By providing opportunities for members to participate in decision-making and community

programs, Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services fosters a sense of ownership and collective responsibility. This inclusive approach ensures that the cooperative remains responsive to the needs of its members and resilient in the face of challenges.

The lessons I've learned about cooperation extend beyond sports and leadership roles: they shape my perspective on contributing to the greater good. Just as Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services leverages the power of collective effort to serve its members, I strive to apply the principles of collaboration and mutual support in every aspect of my life.

For example, Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services' commitment to sustainability aligns with my belief in environmental stewardship. Programs such as community solar gardens and energy efficiency rebates empower members to make choices that benefit both their households and the environment. This holistic approach underscores the potential of cooperation to address complex challenges and create a brighter future for all.

In conclusion, cooperation is the thread that connects the successes of Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services with my personal achievements. From the teamwork that led to state championships in softball and golf to the collaborative efforts that defined my leadership roles, I've witnessed firsthand how working together can turn aspirations into reality. The values embodied by Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services - inclusion, shared responsibility, and a commitment to community resonate deeply with my own experiences and aspirations.

As I reflect on these lessons, I'm inspired to continue fostering cooperation in all areas of my life. Whether contributing to a team, leading an initiative, or supporting a cause, I'll carry forward the understanding that we achieve more together than we ever could alone. Just as Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services empowers its members through collective effort, I'm committed to building a future where cooperation remains the driving force behind progress and success.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Watch your energy bill for capital credit allocation information

The 2024 capital credit allocations notice will be inserted with your energy bill in May and June. The allocation notice will also be available with your energy statement in SmartHub for members enrolled in paperless billing.

Allocations determine each member's share of the cooperative's margin for a given year. Margins are allocated or assigned to members who purchased electricity from the cooperative during the year in which the margin was generated in proportion to the electrical sales for the year. Each member's allocation is determined by the member's total kilowatt-hour consumption for the year. The co-op keeps a permanent record of each member's capital credit account, where the allocated amount remains until it is paid or "retired."

Member number reflects all accounts you may have

Dollar amount of capital credits allocated to member for current allocation year

Cumulative balance of member's capital credits outstanding for all accounts

CAPITAL CREDITS STATEMENT	
Member Number	196
Allocation Year	2024
Total Electric Patronage for Year	\$13.29
Total Electric Capital Credit Allocation For Year	\$8.81
Remaining Electric Capital Credit Allocation	\$8.81

Capital Credits

What are capital credits? Capital credits are a major benefit of belonging to a cooperative. As a cooperative, we're owned by our members. Unlike other electric utilities, your cooperative is a not-for-profit organization. Any revenues (margins) remaining after expenses have been paid are allocated to our members as capital credits that are determined based on each member's share of electrical costs and purchases for the year. Capital credits,



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Nate Boettcher, President & CEO
Liz Gunderson, Editor

W7725 U.S. Highway 10, P.O. Box 420
Ellsworth, WI 54011-0420
715-273-4355 • 800-924-2133
info@piercepépín.coop • www.piercepépín.coop

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