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**WISCONSIN**  
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*Cooperative*  
March 2026 **NEWS**



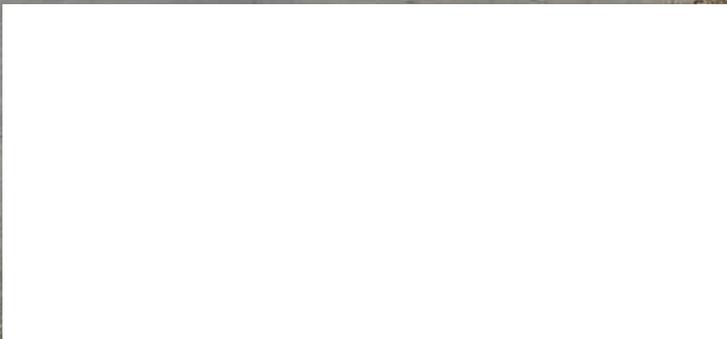
**FROM POWER LINES  
TO FIREWALLS:**

**THE RURAL  
REALITY OF  
CYBER THREATS**

**HOW ENERGY EFFICIENCY  
REBATES AND INCENTIVES WORK**

**AFFORDABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**PEANUT BUTTER RECIPES**





# POWER COST ADJUSTMENTS



Nate Boettcher, President and CEO

Each year, the PPCS Board of Directors reviews the annual operating budget, which includes

the anticipated cost of wholesale power, cooperative expenses, and the revenue needed to recover those expenses. Power costs can be fluid due to market conditions, which are often driven by weather, as we experienced during Winter Storm Fern. Utilities use a mechanism called power cost adjustments to help increase or decrease the cost of energy in response to these market fluctuations.

As much as PPCS works to minimize the impact on members, wholesale power costs have been turbulent. Last year, PPCS paid over \$1 million in power cost adjustment (PCA) charges to our wholesale supplier, Dairyland Power Cooperative. This was the equivalent of an unexpected 8% rate increase. Our contract with Dairyland only allows us to generate a small portion of our own energy, which means we are subject to their power cost adjustments and market prices. In the past, we have tried

to absorb these costs when possible, or in years when power cost adjustments resulted in money being returned, provided credits to our members.

Your bill includes a wholesale power cost adjustment line item. This reflects the amount we recover, or in some years credit back to you, as costs increase

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or decrease. We are now expecting a significant power cost related to a forced generation outage at the JPM plant in Alma, owned and operated by Dairyland. This plant was shut down during Winter Storm Fern, resulting in excessive and costly market purchases now being passed on to PPCS. While the final cost was not available by our publication deadline, we expect this event to have a \$750,000 impact on PPCS and our

members. We are unable to absorb this cost.

Our board has had lengthy discussions regarding rates. These decisions are not taken lightly. The board understands that rate increases impact our members, just as they impact the board members' own accounts. As communicated earlier, rates have increased over the past six months, and those increases will remain in place. In addition, approximately an extra \$0.01 per kWh will be added as a wholesale power cost over the next several months to recover the large power cost adjustment.

Over the past 10 years, combined inflation has increased costs by 34%. During that same period, the PPCS board and staff have worked hard to control rates; these changes have amounted to just 13% during the same 10-year period. Please also note that we will be transitioning to a single billing cycle in March.

Lastly, as we close out 2025 with our auditors, we are also preparing for our Annual Meeting on April 9. We look forward to seeing you at this member event.



# SAVE THE DATE

# 89TH ANNUAL MEETING

April 9, 2026 5:00 P.M.  
Ellsworth High School  
323 Hillcrest Street, Ellsworth, WI

Watch for the  
**Pierce Pepin  
Cooperative  
Services Annual  
Report in next  
month's magazine!**

REMINDER



THE CLOCKS  
*spring forward*  
MARCH 8

## Need help 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, start by contacting the Department of Human Services for the county in which you reside. If you qualify through the county, you may be eligible for a bill credit to be applied to your PPCS electric bill.



**Buffalo County:** 608-685-4412  
**Pierce, Pepin & St. Croix Counties:** 715-265-4271

For more information, contact our billing coordinator at 715-273-4355, 800-924-2133, or [info@piercepepin.coop](mailto:info@piercepepin.coop).



## New Dan Reis Memorial Scholarship Available!

For more information and entry form, go to [www.piercepepin.coop](http://www.piercepepin.coop) under My Community.



# Did you know?

SwiftCurrent Connect offers **fast, reliable fiber internet AND landline phone service** for under **\$100** per month!

## Residential Internet & Phone Service for Under \$100

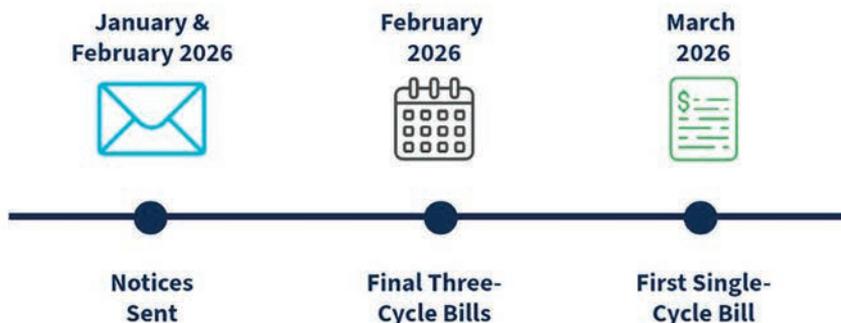


**YOU CAN EVEN KEEP YOUR CURRENT PHONE NUMBER!**

Visit [swiftcurrent.coop](http://swiftcurrent.coop) or call us at **715-350-7033** to learn more today!

Beginning **March 1, 2026**, we will transition from three separate billing cycles to **one unified billing cycle** for all electric members.

### BILLING TRANSITION TIMELINE



Your bill will now be **mailed on the 10th** of the month, and payment will be **due on the last day of the month**.

# GOING ON SPRING BREAK?

## Save Money on Energy Costs While You're Gone!

Taking a vacation can be costly, so a great way to save some money is to give your electric bills a break, too.

There are several things you can do to reduce electricity use but still keep your home running efficiently while you're away:

- **Unplug some of your household appliances.** Your house has many items that always use electricity when they're plugged in, even when turned off or not in use. Unplugging these items not only saves energy, but in some cases, can avoid possible fire hazards during your absence. Some of the more common items include television sets and other home entertainment components, computers, microwave ovens, and toasters.
- **Adjust the refrigerator control to a warmer setting.** The fridge can be as high as 40°F (although 38° is recommended) without spoiling food; the freezer can reach 5°F. (To be safe, check all food when you return home. Better yet, clean out your fridge before you leave.) If you are going on a long trip, shut off your icemaker or consider emptying the fridge and turning it off (remember to leave the door open to prevent mildew).
- **Set the thermostat higher or lower than the typical comfort level.** If it's furnace weather, you should consider lowering your

thermostat, but to no lower than 55° F. Typically, by doing this, you can save 10 to 30% on your heating costs. Or, if you have a smart thermostat, you can control your home's temperature setting remotely.

- **Turn down the water heater.** A large percentage of the cost of running a water heater comes from just keeping the water at the selected temperature. If you are going on a lengthy trip, turn the water heater's temperature to the lowest setting.
- **Consider using timers to turn lights on and off each night.** Timers can save energy and give more of an appearance that someone is home. If you have smart lighting, you can control your home's lighting via your cell phone. Vacation or not, consider using LEDs for inside and outside lights that will be on the longest. An ENERGY STAR-certified



LED light bulb uses about 90% less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs. They also last at least 15 to 25 times longer than traditional bulbs and save about \$80 in electricity costs (per bulb) over their lifetime, according to energystar.gov.

- **Consider purchasing surge protectors for expensive electronics.** Power surges can happen anytime, and surge protectors can protect your devices against these.

Once your home is set up to save on energy costs while you're gone, enjoy that vacation! For more information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**Nate Boettcher, President & CEO**  
**Emily Keeler, Editor**

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Follow us on Facebook, X, and Instagram  
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**Power Outages and Emergencies: 800-927-5705**