



Central Wisconsin
Electric Cooperative

Your Sustainable Energy Cooperative



By Mike Wade,
President & CEO

FROM HERE TO THERE

Consumer technology is changing and I am wondering how long I can keep up with the myriad of new devices available for home and business use. When email and the World Wide Web came out 20 years ago, I was at the top of my technology game. Now, I have to call my son each time our wireless network goes down. A phone app tells me when my daughter's school bus will arrive, and I get an alert when her lunch money goes below \$5. And if you think I won't hear about it when she is unable to purchase a slice of pizza at school you are sadly mistaken.

We are inundated with gadgets and gizmos that allow us to do more than we could have ever dreamed possible.

Much like our personal life, the cooperative is always looking for technology that allows us to do more with less. Our new SmartHub app allows our members access to their billing accounts through their smartphones. They can check their account status, make a payment, or see the kWh usage at their home or business. We are also experimenting with a texting feature that allows our members to be notified if their meter is without power, a very useful tool for those who have cabins or who are traveling. We will continue to be responsible to our membership by looking for technology that helps us save money and makes improvements to our members' way of life.

Speaking of budgets, we are working on a new capital and expense budget for the new year of 2018. Our board of directors is presented with a fairly comprehensive list of goals at their Novem-

ber board meeting and a detailed budget at their December board meeting. The 2018 budget will no doubt have some new technology included, but it will also include a large number of maintenance projects that help us improve reliability to our members. Although we never get to do everything we want in our budgets, we will create one that offers the greatest value to our members at a price they can afford.

In keeping with our cooperative principals, the board of directors approved the retirement of capital credits in the amount of \$129,804. If your capital credits were part of the retirement, you will have noticed a credit on your electric bill or have received a check in the mail. As the cooperative is financially able, it is a privilege to return a portion of your investment in the cooperative to you.

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative was held at the headquarters in Rosholt at 7:54 a.m. on August 31, 2017. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The agenda, minutes of the July 27, 2017, meeting, new and terminated memberships, and the monthly safety report were approved.

Action Items

- a. Monthly Financial Statements and Reports were approved. Finance Committee reviewed checks written, and the board and CEO expenses.
- b. Governance Committee approved changes to Chapter 6.0 Disconnection and Reconnection.
- c. The board approved Bryan Fuhs from the Township of Scandinavia, Sub-District 2(c), to replace Robert Wilhite on the 2018 Nominations Committee.
- d. The board approved the 2017 CFC Nominating Committee and voted on their choice for the CFC District 5 director candidate.
- e. The board voted on their choice for the candidate to fill the four-year term of CoBank director. They also approved the 2018-19 Nominating Committee members.
- f. The board approved Maxine Lemke from the Township of Bevent to fill the additional Member Advisory Group position in Sub-District 3(c).

Operations and Engineering – Year-to-date 110 total miles of vegetation management has been completed. Chapman Metering has completed the testing of our CT meters.

Accounting and Finance – Progress continues towards extending DSL to the Almon Sub for our communications and meter reading systems.

Member Services – Two employees chaperoned seven students from high schools in our service area to the Youth Leadership Congress held at UW-River Falls. The final spraying has been completed for the CWEC Prairie Project and we will be planting the end of September or beginning of October. Three area teachers attended the energy education workshop put on by UW-Stevens Point, with each receiving \$100 sponsorships approved by CWEC through use of our Federated Youth Fund.

President and CEO Report – Four employees will participate in a safety strategy session hosted by Dairyland Power Cooperative over a four-day period. They will survey Wisconsin co-op employees in areas to measure our level of safety engagement related to other states.

Directors reported on the Board Leadership Training they attended, as well as the Employee/Safety Meeting and WECA Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m. and the board and staff departed for their annual service area tour, which included locations of interest and work in progress in our service territory.

Celebrating over 133 Years of Service

As part of our 80th year celebration we thought it would be fun to visit with the three employees who have been with the co-op the longest. The employees and their current position with the co-op are: **Richard Lashua**, service foreman; **Jeanne Opperman**, executive secretary; and **Lenore Peterson**, billing coordinator. We hope you enjoy this as much as we did visiting with them.

Q: When did you start at the co-op?

Richard: June 23, 1969

Jeanne: June 5, 1971

Lenore: June 1, 1978

If our math is correct, this trio has served co-op members for over...drum roll please...133 years.

Q: Who was the U.S. President at the time?

Richard: Richard Nixon

Jeanne: Richard Nixon

Lenore: According to google it was Jimmy Carter.

Q: What were your first job duties at the co-op?

Richard: I did tree trimming and general maintenance.

Jeanne: I worked at the front desk as a receptionist taking electric payments and appliance department sales, merchandise and material billing, monthly inventory, and telephone calls.

Lenore: I sat at a table at the front counter with the receptionist and did a LOT of sorting. At the time the payments stubs had to be sorted before posting, meter reading “cards” had to be sorted in route order before going to meter readers, and in location order when they came back in. I did a lot of filing. I worked with service orders and did typing, lots of typing: letters, purchase orders, etc.

Q: Since you’ve been with the co-op what is the biggest or most significant change you’ve seen in the electric utility business?

Richard: No doubt, it’s the use of computers.

Jeanne: Computers. When I started we did everything so differently, from the smallest thing like sealing an envelope and “licking a stamp” to secure it to a letter. Each letter had to be sealed by hand, not run through a postage meter. At that time

an electric typewriter was a big deal. Back then members read their own electric meters on the 15th of each month and they calculated and either sent in their own bills or came into the office to make their payments during the



Lenore Peterson (l) and Jeanne Opperman



L-R: Jeanne Opperman, Richard Lashua, and Lenore Peterson

specified time. Now meters can be read remotely. Computers affect every aspect of the electric business.

Lenore: Computers and technology. Lots of things have changed greatly in 40 years, but this is what affected my work the most. I first worked on a magnetic posting machine in the billing department. Each member had a large magnetic ledger where their bills and payments were posted. Each ledger had to go through the machine individually to bill, make a payment, change an address and if need be, post a late charge. All disconnect notices were hand typed. Basically everything was done by hand.

Q: What is or has been the most rewarding part of your work at CWEC?

Richard: I would have to say it’s the satisfaction knowing that I’ve been able to help a lot of people over the years. We’ve worked through a lot of storms over the years, always with the goal of getting power restored as quickly and as safely as possible.

Jeanne: The people I have had the opportunity to work with and learn from these many years. We spend so many hours together daily—this group is and has been my “other family” for many years. I have worked with each of the four general managers/CEOs of CWEC and many other employees who have already retired.

Lenore: The most rewarding has been the people I have encountered, whether it’s been our members or fellow employees. It’s nice to be able to help members with questions and to see them at our annual meeting and open house. After 40 years, you do get to know people quite well. Also meeting people from other co-ops and working with them is rewarding, as well as the friendships you build with your fellow employees. It’s a friendship you take with you long after you leave this place.

Q: Before we get to the last question, do you have a funny work story to share?

Richard: We were working late trying to restore power for a member. It was very dark so we were navigating by flashlight. Concentrating on what was over head, my crewmate nearly fell into a pond. We had quite the laugh about it.

Jeanne: Since Jeanne couldn’t come up with one, we’ll take writer privileges and share one. First of all, anyone that



Richard Lashua

knows Jeanne knows that when she's around you can count on laughing. At our member appreciation event we give away a couple of kid's bicycles. Always concerned about safety, Jeanne liked to "test drive" the bikes prior to the meeting. Not only is it a hoot seeing her ride the bikes, one year her test drive resulted in leaving a long black skid mark on the carpet.

Lenore: The one that comes to mind first happened a long, long time ago. Our meter reader in the Village of Tigerton was retiring but before he did we asked him to do one more disconnect. We didn't give him the name or address of the person just the location code. It took him a few minutes but he realized what was going on and said "hey, that's my house." He was a good guy!

Q: Okay last question—when the time comes for retirement what are your plans?

Richard: I'm looking forward to doing more fishing and spending more time with my kids and grandkids.

Jeanne: Nothing too specific—enjoy time with family and attend events the grandchildren are involved in. I'm hoping to get some volunteer time in at a few places.

Lenore: I would hope for good health and like not having the daily commitment to be somewhere at a certain time. I would enjoy perhaps some volunteer work or just help on the farm and helping with my grandkids. They are fun! Doing some traveling would be nice as well.

We'd like to thank Richard, Jeanne, and Lenore for their many years of dedicated service to CWEC members.

We would like to follow up this article with one that features longtime members. If you or your family has been a CWEC member for over 30 years we'd love to hear from you.



Current and past employees gathered with family members of past employees at the Iola Historical Marker Dedication recognizing CWEC for bringing electricity to farms in Iola.

NEW RURAL ELECTRIFICATION MARKER DEDICATED

While today people are seeking high-speed Internet connections, 80 years ago electricity in rural areas was the most pressing issue. In 1939, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) started its program to bring electricity to rural farms. The first farm in the Iola area to get connected was Louie Meyers' farm home on County Hwy. G, now E2140 Lake Road.

This event and the history of CWEC, which started in 1937, is the topic of the Iola Historical Society's Historic Iola No. 11 marker. It was unveiled and dedicated on Tuesday, October 3, at the site of the original CWEC building in downtown Iola, located on South Main Street between Voie Funeral Home and the Iola Village Hall.

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative is very proud to be recognized by the Iola Historical Society with a Historical Marker. Providing electricity was a very important part of the history in rural Iola and the surrounding area.

Community members were welcome, which included current and past employees of CWEC and their family members, Iola Historical Society members, and Iola-Scandinavia Chamber of Commerce members, among others.

The marker will be located on the same block as Historic Iola No. 6—Iola's Dr. Loope—member of first University of Wisconsin football team.

To learn more about the Historic Iola marker program, including locations of current markers, and the Iola Historical Society, go to www.iolahistoricalsociety.org.

ROUND UP DONATIONS

Operation Round Up provides funds for worthy causes, including member hardship cases, educational purposes including scholarships, and charitable organizations. It is funded by volunteer donations from co-op members. Recent beneficiaries of members' generosity include:

- Iola & Scandinavia Fire Depts. – \$100 to assist with their annual fire safety and burn prevention educational programs for area children.
- Sheveland-Taylor American Legion Post 14 – \$500 to assist with creating a "Walk of Honor" monument honoring members of the Armed Forces from the Iola and Scandinavia areas.
- The group had earlier approved donations to the Wittenberg Booster Club for their Grad Bash (\$250), Iola Village Library for summer programs (\$100), and a \$1,000 member hardship.



Lyle Mork, representing Sheveland-Taylor American Legion Post 14, accepts a donation from Sue Halverson, Operation Round Up board member.



DATES TO REMEMBER IN NOVEMBER

Toys for Tots Drive

Now through December 8

Drop site at the CWEC headquarters, items will be distributed to needy children in our service area. For additional collection sites go to our website www.cwecoop.com, click on the Toys for Tots tab under Services. Monday-Friday: 7:30 a.m.–4 p.m., Rosholt. For more information call 715-677-2211.

Share-a-Tea “Sugarplum Fairy – A Christmas Tea”

Saturday, November 4

2–4 p.m. \$25 donation to benefit students in need in the I-S School District, students \$15. Iola-Scandinavia High School Commons. Tickets available at the I-S Elementary or High School office or call Toya at 715-445-3556 or Ila at 715-445-3478.

Veterans Day

Saturday, November 11



Crossroads Community Theatre Presents “Southern Hospitality”

The final play in the Futrelle Family series by Jones, Hope and Wooten, Friday/Saturday, November 10, 11, 17, 18

7 p.m. For tickets, call 715-253-3525 or visit Your Community Shopper office. WOWSPACE, 114 Vinal St., Wittenberg.

19th Tigerton Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, November 18

9 a.m.–3 p.m. Start your Christmas shopping before Black Friday! Lots of vendors, something for everyone. Homemade baked goodies and candies by the Amish. Food and refreshments served at the hall. Tigerton Community Center, 211 Birch St., Tigerton. For more information call 715-508-0246.

Walls of Wittenberg Wreath Making

Begins Saturday, November 25

Continue a family tradition or begin a new one. November 26, December 3, 9, 10, from 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Decorate your own wreath or purchase a lush wreath artfully created by WOW volunteers at the Christmas Craft Fair December 1–2. WOWSPACE, 114 Vinal St., Wittenberg. For more information call 715-253-3525 or go to www.wallsowittenberg.com.

Thanksgiving Day Celebration

Thursday, November 24 and Friday, November 25

Office closed. CWEC wishes you a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday!



3rd Annual Community Christmas Tree Decorating and Lighting

December 1

7 p.m. (new time). Help kick off the holiday season in the WOW Art Park; join in with the choir and fill the park with Christmas carols. Hot cider and cookies will be available. WOWSPACE, 114 Vinal St., Wittenberg. For more information call 715-253-3525 or go to www.wallsowittenberg.com.

Christmas Craft Sale

Friday, December 1, 3–8 p.m.

Saturday, December 2, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

This fun craft and bake sale will get your Christmas shopping off to a good start! Find gifts for family and friends, baked goods to enjoy now or later, and a wreath to deck your halls. WOWSPACE, 114 Vinal St., Wittenberg. For more information call 715-253-3525 or go to www.wallsowittenberg.com.



To submit your community events email brenda.mazemke@cwecoop.com or call Brenda at 715-677-2211.

Daylight Savings Time Ends Sunday, November 5

Remember to move your clock back one hour before you go to bed on Saturday, November 4.



CALENDAR CONTEST WINNERS REVEALED!

The 2017 Member Photo Contest capturing “Life in Rural Wisconsin” is now complete, and the 22 winning photos have been revealed! The selected photos will be featured in the 2018 Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Calendar, first available on Saturday, October 28, at our Member Appreciation Pancake Breakfast.



Jeanette MacKay, Wittenberg – cover
Stephanie Burclaw, Rosholt – January
Steve Hanke, Wittenberg – February
Louis Oppor, Scandinavia – March
Sharon Anderson, Rosholt – April
Jeanette MacKay, Wittenberg – May
Kevin Patrick, Amherst Jct. – June
Marlene Cordie, Ogdensburg – July
Donn Lord, Tigerton – August
Laurie Kosmalski, Rosholt – September
Mary Ellie, Iola – October
Linda Portnoy, Tigerton – November
Robert Garski, Rosholt – December

Jerry and Andie Mavis, Wittenberg – January 2019

Honorable Mention

Phyllis Delikowski, Wittenberg
Scott Kurszewski, Wittenberg
Judy Morey, Ogdensburg
Marianne Rhodes, Wittenberg
Kimberly Schreiber-Duffek, Bowler
Joann Davids, Bowler
Erica Stoeger, Rosholt
Scott R. Maichle, Town of Almon

With over 50 entries this year, the voting committee had their work cut out for them. Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative graciously thanks all of the members who participated. Information for the 2018 contest will be available in February 2018. View all the winning photos at www.cwecoop.com.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATES AVAILABLE

Did you know your cooperative offers rebates for energy efficiency upgrades? If not, we’re pleased to inform you we offer rebates for all sorts of upgrades including Energy Star appliance purchases, insulation, new windows, heat pumps, alternative water heaters, LED lighting, and much more. For a detailed listing, visit www.cwecoop.com or give us a call.

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative will be closed Thursday, November 23, and Friday November 24, for the Thanksgiving holiday. Regular business will resume on Monday, November 27. From everyone here at CWEC, we wish you a safe and enjoyable holiday.



Mike Wade, President & CEO

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