



Electric Line Newsletter

ALMOST 200 MEMBERS ATTEND VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative held its 2020 Annual Meeting virtually on April 27, with just under 200 members logging in and participating in the meeting.

CWEC had hoped it would be able to return to its traditional in-person annual meeting in 2021, but due to the continued presence of COVID-19, the CWEC Board of Directors chose to hold a virtual annual meeting. The decision was made for the safety of CWEC members and employees.

The virtual meeting lasted around 30 minutes.

Director Tony Buss and Director Leonard Oppor, who both decided to retire from the CWEC Board of Directors and didn't run for reelection, were recognized and thanked for their time of service to CWEC. Buss served on the board for 20 years, while Oppor served for 12 years.

Ron Onesti was announced the winner of the District 1 Director election. He ran unopposed and received 154 votes. He will replace Anthony Buss Jr. on the board.

Lou Oppor was announced the winner of the District 2 Director election. He received 204 votes, while Gregory Loeser received 170 votes. Lou Oppor will replace Leonard Oppor on the board.

After the meeting, the following members who attended the virtual meeting were randomly selected for the following door prizes: \$100 bill credit – Gary Johnson; \$50 bill credit – Charles Filtz, Roger Napiwocki, and John Kieliszewski; \$25 bill credit – David Paulson, John Mesyk, Guy Russ, Kyle Brown, Georgia Link, Donald Sorenson, Sheila Kroseberg, Jeanne Opperman, Shelly Ostrowski, and Ronald Balke.

Board elects new officers

When the CWEC Board of Directors met on April 29 it elected new officers.

Director Tom Smith was elected as Chairman, while Director Mike Schultz was elected Vice-Chairman and Director Lee Lehrer was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

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Office Hours: Monday thru
Friday; 7:30 a.m.—4 p.m.

**Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative
will be closed Monday, May 31 for the
Memorial Day holiday. From
everyone here at CWEC, we wish you
a safe and enjoyable holiday.**



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TREE TRIMMING IMPROVES SERVICE FOR ALL

One of the things I love best about our community is the natural beauty that surrounds us. We are fortunate to have so many trees that offer beauty, shade and a habitat for all sorts of birds and other wildlife. We know that you appreciate our community for many of the same reasons.

At Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC), we strive to balance maintaining beautiful surroundings and ensuring a reliable power supply by keeping power lines clear in rights of way (ROW).

While we recognize and appreciate the beauty of trees, there are three main benefits to tree trimming in ROW areas. However, before touching on the main reasons, let me explain what a “right of way” is and how it may impact you. A right of way is the land we use to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. Rights of way enable the co-op to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder the power line installation, maintenance or operation. ROW areas are typically on public lands or located near a business or home. Regardless, CWEC must be able to maintain the power lines above and below the ROW. The overall goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our community. Proactive vegetation management benefits co-op members in three tangible ways.

Safety

First and foremost, we care about our members and put their safety and that of our lineworkers above all else. Overgrown vegetation and trees pose a risk to power lines. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members’ yards, they can pose grave danger to families. If children can access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor like a tree. A proactive approach also diminishes the chances of fallen branches or trees during severe weather events that make it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.

Reliability

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is reliability. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines causing power outages. Generally speaking, healthy trees don’t fall on power lines, and clear lines don’t cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keeps lines clear to promote reliability.

Affordability

As you know, CWEC is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we strive to keep our costs in check in order to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Our community is a special place. We appreciate the beauty trees afford, but we also know our community depends on us to provide reliable energy. Through vegetation management, we are better able to keep the power lines clear, prepare for future weather events and secure the reliability of the grid.

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Practice Safety When DIY-ing

These days many of us are spending more time at home and finding new, creative ways to enhance our living space. Tackling do-it-yourself (DIY) projects for the home can be fun and cost-effective, so why not roll up those sleeves and get started! Whether you're painting the front door with a fresh hue or finally upgrading those patio lights, successfully completing a DIY home project is incredibly satisfying. But many of these projects do not come without risks. Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind as you get to work.

Start by selecting a designated work area. The amount of space you'll need will depend on the size and scope of your project, but make sure you have adequate lighting and ventilation (if necessary). Required tools and equipment should be located in your workspace and organized for easy access.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is your friend. We know you're a pro but investing a few bucks in PPE is essential for most home projects. Stock up on safety goggles, dust masks, ear plugs (or noise reduction ear protectors), gloves and any other kind of protection you'll need for your project. Remember to wear appropriate clothing and shoes. (Ditch the sandals for this!)

Work slowly and clean as you go. When you rush through a DIY project, you'll likely end up with less desirable results than you intended, or worse, you could make a costly or dangerous mistake. Take your time and remember that you are in control of the project. You should also clean as you go to ensure a safer workspace. Pick up any scrap materials, tools that aren't in use and any tripping hazards.

Be cautious with power tools. Annually, 8% of electrocutions in the U.S. are attributed to improper use of power tools. The Electrical Safety Foundation International offers the following safety tips:

- Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) with every power tool to protect against electrical shock.
- Never use power tools near live electrical wires or water pipes.
- Use extreme caution when cutting or drilling into walls where electrical wires or water pipes could be accidentally touched or penetrated.
- If a power tool trips a safety device while in use, take the tool to a manufacturer-authorized repair center for service.
- Do not use power tools without the proper guards.

When using a wet-dry vacuum cleaner or a pressure washer, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid electrical shock.

Remember, you should only tackle DIY home projects within your skill and comfort level. For projects that require extensive electrical work, we strongly recommend you hire a licensed, qualified electrician for assistance.

