



**Central Wisconsin
Electric Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



By Mike Wade,
President & CEO

WITH TURN OF THE CALENDAR, CWEC TURNS FOCUS TO 2020

As the snow settles on a new year, the cooperative is looking forward to spring and the construction season that lies before us. The board of directors approved our capital and operating budget at its December board meeting, and staff has begun the process of preparing to implement the new budget. Our focus will be to make improvements that allow us to better serve our membership and provide the safe and reliable energy our members expect and deserve.

Our 2019 Toys for Tots campaign was a huge success. The members of the cooperative and our friends in the community were extremely generous with their giving this year. We collected toys from across our service area and helped provide a joyous Christmas to over 1,000 children in central Wisconsin. My thanks

to all of you who participated in this program, and we look forward to another successful Toys for Tots program in 2020.

Concerning the 2020 board of director election, you will be receiving ballot materials in the mail in mid-March. Please look for this mailing and remember to complete the ballot and return it in the enclosed return envelope prior to the deadline. The results of the director election will be announced at our annual meeting in April.

Speaking of the annual meeting, this year's meeting will take place on Tuesday, April 21, at the Wittenberg-Birnamwood High School in Wittenberg. If you have not previously attended an annual meeting, I encourage you to attend to learn more about your cooperative. Details of the annual meeting will be included in the March edition of the *WECN* magazine.

As the construction and maintenance of our system begins in the spring, I encourage all of our members to be courteous and respectful to our line crews and contractors as they work on our system in 2020. If you have any questions about the work being done, do not hesitate to contact our office to get answers. We remain dedicated to working on programs and services that offer the best value to the membership. Together, we can meet the challenges that lay before us, and I look forward to a bright year ahead.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Are you using your fireplace efficiently? Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire, and close the damper when a fire is not burning.—Source: *energy.gov*



BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative was held at the headquarters in Rosholt at 8:01 a.m. on November 21, 2019. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The agenda, minutes of the October 31, 2019 meeting, new and terminated memberships, and the monthly safety and compliance report were approved.

Action Items

- Monthly Financial Statements and Reports were approved. Finance Committee reviewed checks written and the board and CEO expenses.
- Mackenzie Yarbrough gave a video and slide presentation on his trip to Guatemala for the NRECA International project to provide power to Tierra Blanca Chixoy.
- Krista Donahue of CliftonLarsonAllen LLP gave a presentation via conference call on the 2018 IRS Form 990 to the board.
- The management staff each gave a brief overview of their proposed 2020 annual goals.
- Information was presented to the board by Mr. Kurtzweil and Ms. Mazemke on the GenerLink system. This is a device that plugs into a meter and allows members to safely connect a portable generator to their homes during power outages. More information will be provided to the board at the December meeting.
- The board approved the addition of new equipment rates on the fee schedule in the Service Rules and Regulations.
- Discussion was held regarding the maintenance-only outdoor light program. Options for continuing or ceasing the program will be presented at the December meeting.
- The board approved all directors to attend the WECA Education and Lobby Days in Madison January 28–29, 2020.

- The board approved the selection of Jeremy Resch to the Nominations Committee, replacing the vacancy in Sub-District 1(b).
- The board approved Jeff Strassburg (Sub-District 1(a)), Paula Rew (Sub-District 1(b)), John Mikels (Sub-District 2(a)), and Virginia Wentzel (Sub-District 3(a)) as the new replacements on the Member Advisory Group, filling the vacancies due to term limits expiring. The vacancy in Sub-District 3(b) is open and will be discussed at the December meeting.
- Mr. Wade discussed the 2020 NRECA ACRE Membership Drive that begins January 1, 2020. Directors were advised to contact Ms. Patoka with their membership level of participation.
- The board approved the same representatives for the 2020 WECA Committees as last year. Those being: Director Rombalski – Legislative and Regulatory Committee, Director Eckendorf – Education and Member Services Committee, Director Buss – JT&S Committee, and Mr. Kurtzweil – JT&S Rules Sub-Committee and JT&S Apprenticeship Sub-Committee.
- After discussion, the board approved a Christmas gift for all employees.

Operations and Engineering – Mr. Kurtzweil reported the work plan project along County Road J is terminated. The contract has been signed with Vanguard Utility Partners to begin our underground locating as of November 25, 2019.

Accounting and Finance – Financial reports were reviewed. Ms. Shower added she is continuing to work with FEMA and the Wisconsin Disaster Fund regarding the summer 2019 storm damage.

Member Services – Ms. Mazemke reported the new website is up and running.

President and CEO – Mr. Wade provided his CEO report. Meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.



TOYS FOR TOTS CAMPAIGN BRIGHTENS CHRISTMAS FOR AREA KIDS

For many kids, Christmas is a happy and festive season, culminating with the opening of presents on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Unfortunately, that isn't the case for some kids, as their families are unable to purchase Christmas presents for them.

For more than 15 years Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative has tried its best to help alleviate that problem for as many families as it can by partnering with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve to coordinate a Toys for Tots campaign. Through this campaign, toys are collected, sorted, and then distributed to communities and families in the CWEC service area. This area covers parts of: western Waupaca County (including Iola-Scandinavia and Manawa school districts), northern Portage County (including Rosholt School District), southern Marathon County (including Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District), and western Shawano County (including Tigerton and Bowler school districts).

"We will not turn any family away that needs toys for

their children," said Brenda Mazemke, manager of member relations for CWEC.

The 2019 Toys for Tots campaign overseen by CWEC distributed 3,400 toys, helping 1,080 kids. In 2018 the campaign reached 1,020 kids. The success of the CWEC Toys for Tots campaign depends on the involvement of all departments at the co-op, Mazemke said.

"Our goal, along with the Toys for Tots Foundation, is to help the less fortunate children in the communities we serve," Mazemke said. "The program unites all our employees, members, and communities in a common cause for three months each year during the annual toy collection and distribution campaign."

"It is part of our mission to support our communities and one of our seven principles, which is Commitment to Community."

CWEC thanks all those who helped make this year's program a huge success and helped put a smile on a child's face for Christmas. Thank you to all the area coordinators and the collection sites.



DELL OLSON RETIRES AFTER ALMOST 40 YEARS WITH CWEC

If you would have asked Dell Olson when he accepted a job at Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative in May 1981 if he would spend almost 40 years working at the co-op, he would have said “no.” But that’s exactly what happened, as Olson retired from CWEC on Jan. 2, after almost 40 years.



“It’s been interesting. I enjoyed working here. There have been a lot of changes,” Olson said on his last day at the co-op.

One of the major changes Olson referred to was the switch from paper records to computers.

“I preferred the paperwork,” Olson said with a laugh. “I’m sure the younger generation likes the electronics.”

Olson started with CWEC working on the brush crew, clearing trees and brush. Over the years he worked his way to an equipment operator.

He said the equipment he operated didn’t change as much as the record-keeping systems did.

“I ran the digger truck setting poles and I ran into a couple of really good trucks, so no complaints there,” Olson said.

Olson said he still enjoyed coming to work each day, but knew that now was the right time to retire. And how did he know it was the right time to retire?

“Probably the cold bones,” he said with a laugh. “With winter setting in, I’m feeling my age, slowing down a little bit.”

Still, he admitted retirement was a difficult decision to make.

“For it being such an exciting thing for me, it’s sad to leave,” Olson said.

According to Olson, the camaraderie with his fellow line crews, and interacting with members of the co-op are what he will miss the most.

After working at the co-op for almost 40 years, one can imagine Olson leaves with a lot of memories. The memories that stick in his mind the most are from the major storms that hit the area. He remembers working 36 straight hours to restore power for members after some of those storms.

“There were some ice storms that were pretty challenging because it’s harder to get around,” Olson said.

The most challenging storms Olson remembers, though, rolled through the CWEC service area July 19 and 20 last year.

“We had a pretty good storm Friday night and we were restoring power on that and then Saturday morning heavier winds came, so we were back repairing what was just repaired,” he said.

Helping members get their electricity back was one of the satisfying things about Olson’s job.

“That’s our job and I enjoyed getting them back on,” Olson said. “There were people upset, but they were understanding overall when they saw what you were up against.”

In retirement, Olson said he plans on staying busy. This includes traveling, as he has a brother who lives in Florida, and his daughters live in California.

CWEC thanks Olson for his many years of service and dedication to the members of CWEC.

CHRISTMAS COLORING CONTEST WINNERS!

Christmas is such a special time of year, especially for our children. They have so many opportunities to display their talents whether it is a Christmas program at school or church, or drawing a Christmas

stocking to bring the Christmas spirit to the CWEC office.

We had 12 submissions this year, making it very difficult for our judges. There is a lot of talent out there; keep up the great work, kids. We want to

thank all the kids who entered for their hard work; we look forward to seeing your great drawings each year.

Here are our choices in each category:

6 years old & under



\$25 – Oden Jankowski



\$15 – Faith Jankowski



\$10 – Isaiah Anderson

7 to 10 years old



\$25 – Cole Erdmann



\$15 – Abby H. VanderKooy



\$10 – Natalie Murphy



BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

THIS FARM SAYS "CHEESE"

Dambroski Family Farm keeps family in the name. The farm, which is located in Amherst, has been in the family for 76 years, since 1943. What started as 40 cows grew to 140 cows over the years. Keith and Joshua Dambroski, grandsons of the original owner, are in the process of buying the farm from their father. With this purchase, the Dambroski Family Farm will be in the family for three generations.

"It is important to keep the farm in the family," Keith Dambroski said. "We grew up working on the farm, so it only feels right."

The 140 cows on the farm are used to produce milk. The milk is sold exclusively to Mullin's Cheese, where it is used to make quality Wisconsin cheese. Although most of the cows are used for dairy, Dambroski Family Farm also owns beef cattle.

The farm boasts a barn for calves, an outdoor pasture for cows to roam out-



Calves enjoy their own space as they grow into the new generation of milking cows.

side, and a large milking suite. During the snowstorm in April of 2018, the original cow barn collapsed under the weight of the snow. When the family rebuilt the barn, they also expanded and upgraded with new LED lights and fans. The barn isn't at capacity, so there is room for growth.

"Our goal is to continue to expand and add more cows to the farm," Keith explained. "We have the room now, so we have that opportunity."

Along with producing milk, the farm also grows corn, soy, and alfalfa on 200 acres of sprawling farmland. The crops are used for feed.

Rebate Reminder

Have your projects around the house included any energy-saving home-improvement measures? Perhaps you've updated your appliances to new, energy efficient models or insulated your home.

If so, be sure to check the energy rebates available to our members. Go to www.cwecoop.com to see which Energy Star products qualify for a rebate.

Don't delay—Receipts must be submitted in the year the items were purchased to qualify.

DATES TO REMEMBER IN FEBRUARY

5th Annual Iola Snow Bully Fat Bike Race Friday, January 31

6 p.m., under the lights at the Iola Winter Sports Club. For more information contact Scott Cole at 715-340-3683.

59th Annual Iola Winter Carnival Saturday, February 1

8 a.m.—noon: ice sculpting at the Iola-Scandinavia High School. 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.: free children's ice fishing contest on Lake Iola (16 and under). 1 p.m.-6 p.m.: Norwegian Lutefisk Supper and Indoor Craft Sale at Iola High School—includes lutefisk, lefse, Norwegian meatballs and all the trimmings, plus a craft show. 1 p.m.: skijoring at the Iola Winter Sports Club; for more information contact Jerry Thompson at 715-824-2014. 6 p.m.: Twilight Snowshoe Race at the Iola Winter Sports Club; for more information contact Jeff Crumbaugh at 715-701-0360.

Sunday, February 3

Noon, Central Ski Jumping Championships Iola Winter Sports Club. For more information about the outside events go to www.iolawintersportsclub.org or call 715-445-3411.

4th Annual Tree Lake Association Fisherie

Saturday, February 8

There is no charge for fishing. There will be 1st, 2nd, and 3rd cash prizes in the fish categories. Live music from 1-4 p.m., 50/50 raffle plus many other tickets sold for many other prizes. Raffle tickets are 3 for \$5 with first place being \$500 cash and 2nd place a Hummingbird Ice - 35 Flasher. Other prizes for the raffle drawing include 2020 Rosholt Fair VIP Family Pack for 4, Milwaukee Heated Vest with battery and charger, and several \$100

donations. Two kids' baskets, kids sign up free to win. Food and beverage will be served. Set up will be at the boat landing off Cty Hwy A. For more information contact Jan Kraetsch at 715-581-1965 or email her at jankraetsch@gmail.com. If you would like to donate a prize contact Jan.

St. Adalbert Parish Fish Fry Every Friday, February 21 through Friday, April 3

4-7:30 p.m. Includes choice of potato, coleslaw, bread, and one dessert. Coffee and milk included in the dining room. For take-out orders call 715-677-4518. Domestic and craft beers and flavored malt beverages available. Large weekly raffle. For more information go to www.rosholtcatholic.org. Rosholt.



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Our Mission

We are your trusted energy partner and provider of valued community support.