




**Central Wisconsin  
Electric Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



By Mike Wade,  
President & CEO

## STEPS TAKEN TO KEEP ELECTRICITY FLOWING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Because I write my article one month in advance of the magazine's distribution to our members, I have to anticipate what will happen in the future and write accordingly. Normally, this is not a difficult task. The cooperative plans months in advance for the rollout of our programs and services, and much of the time I am reporting on what the cooperative has done in the recent past. Given the current status of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am hoping that when you read this article, the number of cases of illness is on the decline and the situation is beginning to improve. Our thoughts and prayers are with our members, and we hope that you are staying safe and healthy.

The cooperative has been working diligently to stay informed of the status of the pandemic, to protect our employees and our members from exposure, and

to continue to provide safe and reliable electric energy to our members. To help keep our members safe, we have closed our lobby and community room to the public. And to help our members who are in financial need, we have suspended disconnects and late fees until the public health emergency has been lifted. Some of our employees have been working from home while others are coming in and working in isolation to perform critical tasks. Our linemen have been working in pairs from their homes and are isolating themselves from other employees to the degree they are able. I am very proud of our employees for working through this challenging and disruptive time to continue to perform the necessary work of our cooperative.

On a safety note, another spring season is upon us. For many of you, spring means planting your favorite flowers and working in the yard after the long winter. If your work involves digging,

be reminded that electric, gas, cable, or other utility lines may be lurking beneath the surface. Before you dig that hole or cut that trench, call 8-1-1 to request that these lines be marked. This is a free service that is easy to use and will help keep you safe.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the upcoming Memorial Day. On behalf of the cooperative, I want to thank all of the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. May God bless each of you and keep everyone safe and healthy.

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When the weather is nice, put your grill to use! During summer months, cooking outdoors is a great way to save energy and eliminate unwanted heat from cooking indoors.



MY CO-OP

## BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative was held at the headquarters in Rosholt at 7:56 a.m. on February 27, 2020. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The agenda, minutes of the January 30, 2020 meeting, new and terminated memberships, and the monthly safety and compliance 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. The board approved changes to the Service Rules and Regulations, the Bylaws-Article IV-Directors, Board Policy 101-Qualifications for Eligibility to Serve on the Board of Directors, and Board Policy 202-Director Fees and Expenses as presented by the Governance Committee.
- c. The board approved the agenda for the 2020 Annual Meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 21, 2020, at the Wittenberg-Birnamwood High School (Special Note: The annual meeting has been postponed due the COVID-19 health emergency).
- d. Bert Lehman, member relations specialist, gave a training presentation to the board on the operation of the electric vehicle.
- e. Brenda Mazemke, manager of member relations, and Kevin Kurtzweil, VP of operations, gave a presentation to the board on the duties and responsibilities of an energy advisor/key accounts specialist position.
- f. The board approved a Resolution for Commitment to Zero Contacts Initiative as presented by Kevin Kurtzweil.
- g. The board approved donating a 2003 Ford F-350 truck to NWTC-Green Bay for use in their EPD Program.
- h. The board approved a revolving loan fund for Lashua Automotive.
- i. The board approved a Resolution Authorizing the Sale of the Wittenberg Spec Building.

Operations and Engineering – Mr. Kurtzweil reported on the hazard recognition inspections. Crews completed the Rosholt substation back feed project as requested by Alliant. Badger Heating & Cooling has been working on the HVAC system issues.

Accounting and Finance – Financial reports were reviewed. Member Services – Ms. Mazemke reported the Commitment to Community 2019 Annual Report has been submitted to the Public Service Commission.

President and CEO – Mike Wade, CEO, reported on his submitted report.

Meeting adjourned at 1:59 p.m.



## CWEC TAKES STEPS TO HELP MEMBERS COPE WITH COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As the COVID-19 pandemic encroached on Wisconsin, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) took steps to ensure electricity would continue to keep flowing to our members.

The lobby doors at our headquarters in Rosholt were closed to the public. Some CWEC employees started working from home, while those who needed to come to the office to perform critical tasks worked in isolation. CWEC linemen began working in pairs, and didn't come to the office unless they needed to replenish their supplies. This allowed our linemen to isolate themselves from other employees as much as possible.

All these steps were taken to ensure that CWEC employees could continue to provide the services our members have come to expect, as well as ensuring that

our linemen could continue to work in the field to keep electricity flowing.

As we continue to serve our members, we are also mindful that the COVID-19 pandemic may be causing financial stress for some of our members regarding their monthly electric bill. We encourage all members to pay their monthly electric bill as they have in the past.

For those members who are experiencing a financial hardship because of the pandemic, we will not disconnect members for non-payment. We will also not charge late fees for non-payment. This will be in effect until the public health emergency is lifted. These decisions were made so that our members don't have to worry about losing electricity when they need it the most.

We remind you that all members are

still responsible for paying their electric bill. If you can't pay your entire electric bill, we encourage you to pay as much of the bill as you can. By paying as much as you can, members won't fall as far behind, and it won't be as daunting a task to pay the bill after the public health emergency is over.

We also want to remind members to monitor their electric usage during this time, because when you stay at home more, you will use more electricity.

As we continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic, any steps we take in accordance with local, state, and federal directives and the CDC, will be posted on our website at [www.cwecoop.com](http://www.cwecoop.com) or our Facebook page. Any additional steps we take will be with the safety of our members, employees and the public in mind.

## CWEC DONATES USE OF IPADS TO ASSISTED LIVING RESIDENTS

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) has provided three iPads to be used at Living Oaks and The Willows assisted living locations in Iola so residents can communicate with family and friends during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the onset of COVID-19, which tends to be more dangerous for the elderly, visitors were restricted from entering the two facilities. Only medically necessary personnel were being allowed into the facilities.

In an effort to have residents continue to communicate with family and friends, Heather Berg, assisted living administrator for Living Oaks and The Willows, reached out to members in the community in search of iPads the facilities could use.

Upon receiving that email, Lila Shower, vice president of accounting and finance for CWEC, immediately began the process of securing iPads for residents of Living Oaks and The Willows.

"The residents haven't been allowed to see any of their family and they (staff) had the idea that possibly they could video conference the relatives for the residents so they could at least see each other," Shower said, on why she worked to secure the iPads.

She added, "One of our seven principles is commitment to community and this is the perfect example to commitment to community. We wanted to help out our community and the residents of The Willows and Living Oaks."

Berg said both residents and family members of residents were excited to hear about the use of iPads to communicate during this time.

"We are getting a lot of positive feedback," Berg said.

When a resident wants to use one of the iPads, everything is set up for them.



Heather Berg (left), assisted living administrator for Living Oaks and The Willows, accepts three iPads from CWEC VP of Accounting and Finance, Lila Shower (right). The iPads will be used by residents at the two facilities to communicate with family and friends.

"By the time the resident actually is physically holding the iPad, their loved one is on the screen," Berg said. "They're happy to see someone that they love and care about. It's been a good experience."

Berg said she feels the use of the iPads has helped brighten the days for residents during this time.

She added that the use of the CWEC iPads is just one of many ways in which the community has stepped forward to help both facilities. This includes supportive emails from members of the community, people dropping things off, letters being submitted by members of the community, the local grocery store doing free deliveries, and family members taking part in window conversations.

"We've had a lot of community involvement, which has been very positive," Berg said.

## CWEC UPGRADES VILLAGE OF TIGERTON STREET LIGHTS TO LED

With a grant provided through the USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) recently completed a project that replaced approximately 100 street lights with LED lights in the village of Tigerton.

REAP provides financial assistance to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to complete a variety of clean energy projects. It's direct project grants provide funding to purchase, install, and construct a renewable energy or energy efficiency project.

The grant for the project was applied for by CWEC. We became aware of the availability of the grant for the Tigerton light project while we were working on a different grant.

"I inquired to see if this (Tigerton project) would qualify and it did," said Dennis Magee, line manager for CWEC. "They didn't think it was going to qualify because it wasn't as big of a project, but it actually did."

Magee said CWEC started the application process for the grant, and informed the village of Tigerton about the application.

"They were good with it," Magee said.

CWEC received \$13,417 through the grant to replace the 150-watt high-pressure sodium light fixtures with energy efficient 82-watt LED light fixtures. The arms holding the lights were also replaced. The LED lights are Department of Transportation approved, which means that the bulbs are designed to be used as street lights, and cause less glare to drivers on the road.

"LED lighting is truly a win-win for the community and the cooperative," said Mike Wade, president and CEO of CWEC. "The light-emitting diodes have a longer life than traditional high-pressure sodium lamps and produce a better light pattern and color. They use less energy and will require less maintenance. We will continue to replace our older outdoor lights with LED until our entire system is LED."

John Bestul, CWEC service foreman, who did the work removing the old lights and installing the new lights, said Tigerton residents he spoke with like the new lights, with some pointing out the new LED lights are brighter than the old lights.

LED lighting offers a clean and eco-friendly lighting that provides a significant electricity and maintenance savings



CWEC Service Foreman John Bestul installs a new LED light fixture to a light pole in the village of Tigerton.

to both communities and its residents.

Magee said that one of the stipulations of the grant is that the energy savings has to be documented.

The new LED lights also benefit CWEC because the lights will require less maintenance.

"The LEDs we have seem to be really working well, and last well," Magee said. "We're not doing as much maintenance so we're saving the co-op money and labor."

Bestul estimates he spent more than 80 hours working on the project.

"With the whole process, we were also able to find and fix a lot of little issues and clean some of the poles up and give them a cleaner look," Bestul said.

Magee added that it is important for CWEC to do projects like this in communities it serves.

"We want to show that we want to be energy efficient too, just like everybody else," Magee said.

Wade added, "I am grateful to the USDA for making grant programs like REAP available to electric co-ops so that we have an economical means to move to energy saving devices like LED lights."

### 2020 MEMBER PHOTO CONTEST

#### "Life in Rural Wisconsin"

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative is holding our annual photo contest for members' photos to be featured in our 2021 calendar. Winning photos may be used in future newsletters or cooperative publications.



- Photos must be taken within the CWEC service area.
- Photos should capture life in rural Wisconsin (seasons, wildlife, landscape, people, etc.)
- Photos must have a horizontal (landscape) orientation.
- Photos can be in color or black and white.
- Contest will run from April 1, 2020 until August 26, 2020; however, submitted photos can be taken outside of this date range.

#### Photo Contest Entry Options:

**Email:** Bert Lehman at bert.lehman@cwecoop.com

**Mail:** PO Box 100, Rosholt, WI 54473. (Photo(s) must be 8"x10" in size)

**Online:** www.cwecoop.com/member-photo-contest

**Drop Off:** Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Office – 10401 Lystul Road, Rosholt. (Photo(s) must be 8"x10" in size)

For a complete set of rules as well as entry forms and photo release forms, visit our website, [www.cwecoop.com](http://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 energy efficient appliances, insulation, windows, electric water heaters, LED lighting, and qualifying heating and air conditioning. For a detailed listing please visit [www.cwecoop.com](http://www.cwecoop.com) or give us a call.





## CWEC MEMBERS CAN DO MORE AT CWEC WEBSITE

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative continues to make improvements to its website in an effort to allow members to do more business online. This has become especially important during this time when our lobby doors are closed to members due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Until recently, different forms that members are required to fill out for different items had to be printed from the website, and then mailed to or dropped off at the CWEC office. Over the past several months, several of these forms have been made available to be filled out and submitted at our website at [www.cwecoop.com](http://www.cwecoop.com).

One of the first forms that was available to be submitted online was the Operation Round Up scholarship application for first-time and repeat applicants. Once the online submission forms were available, almost 100% of the applications received were submitted online.

Now members can also sign up online for Automatic Bill Pay. Automatic Bill Pay sets you up for recurring secure and safe transfers or payments from your bank or credit card to pay your bill. Advantages of auto-pay include: no waiting in line, no checks to write, no postage required, and no past-due bills or late fees.

Now through Oct. 31, all members enrolled in automatic bill pay billing will automatically be entered for a chance to win a \$25 bill credit. To sign up for Automatic Bill Pay, go to [www.cwecoop.com](http://www.cwecoop.com), click on the billing tab on the menu bar, choose Payment Options from the drop-down menu, and then click on the Sign Up for Automatic Bill Payment button.

Other forms that can now be submitted online include: Operation Round Up donation requests, 2020 Photo Contest submissions, and requests to be part of the Member Advisory Group.

“We are always trying to make it easier for our members to do business with us, and one way is providing more online options,” said Brenda Mazemke, manager of member relations for CWEC. “We will continue to add more online options, and will keep you informed as they are made available.”



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**Mike Wade, President & CEO**  
**Bert Lehman, Editor**

### Board of Directors

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### Our Mission

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

## Never miss a payment AND earn a \$25 bill credit

Each month, all members enrolled in Automatic Bill Pay billing will automatically be entered for a chance to win a \$25 bill credit. \*  
**This includes current and future participants!**

**Automatic Bill Pay** is when you set up recurring secure and safe transfers or payments from your bank or credit card to pay your bill

**Not yet signed up for Auto-Pay**—Please fill out the automatic payment form online and return it to our office for processing. Go to [www.cwecoop.com](http://www.cwecoop.com) under the Billing tab then payment options/automatic bill pay. For more information call 1-800-377-2932.



#### What are some of the advantages to auto-pay?

- No waiting in line
- No checks to write
- No postage required
- No past-due bills or late fees

**Sign Up Today!**

Offer expires October 31, 2020

\*Limit one win per year per member.



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