



**Central Wisconsin
Electric Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



By Mike Wade,
President & CEO

PANDEMIC HASN'T SLOWED DOWN WORK AT CWEC

The short Wisconsin summer is coming to an end and we now look forward to the beginning of fall. The COVID-19 virus has found its way into rural Wisconsin and I hope that all of you are staying healthy and safe. Despite the pandemic, my family did its best to enjoy the summer activities of Wisconsin. But I am ready to see fall colors and enjoy the cool weather we experience as the seasons change. I hope you do so as well.

Thanks to all of you who were able to participate in our first virtual annual meeting. Our preference is to be able to meet with you in-person to discuss the business of the cooperative and to learn directly from you the value of our programs and services. Due to the pandemic, we felt that an in-person meeting would not be ideal given our concern for the health and welfare of our members and employees. The creation of a virtual or online meeting was an experience that was positive and educational for our staff. I am not sure we will need to use this format in the future, but I appreciate having the experience and

the ability to do it should the need arise. Having said that, I hope our next annual meeting format allows us once again, to shake hands and thank you in person for your support of our cooperative.

It has been just over one year since the devastating storm that caused so much destruction in our area. I will always remember July 19-20, 2019 as the dates of the worst storm in my 30-year career. The storm caused unprecedented damage to our overhead system, but we are fortunate that three of the counties we serve in were eligible for FEMA assistance. Our accounting and operations departments have been diligently working since the restoral to apply for financial aid with the assistance of our county emergency management personnel and state officials. FEMA aid is beginning to come in which we will use to offset the expenses associated with the storm.

Another project we are wrapping up, is the installation of LED lighting in the Stockbridge-Munsee community. In the spring, we completed the installation of the new energy efficient lighting in the village of Tigerton and we will only be installing LED lighting in our system going forward.

Thanks to John Bestul, our service foreman, and other linemen for their faithful effort to get the new lights installed. Our communities are now brighter and more energy efficient than they have ever been.

We are presently in discussions about how best to conduct a Member Appreciation Breakfast in October. I am not ready to announce at this time how the event will be conducted, but we will have a formal announcement in the near future. As with our annual meeting, the safety of our members and employees will be key to the decision.

From all of us, I hope you enjoy the final days of summer and we wish all of you a safe and healthy September. Be well.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Clothes dryers make up a large portion of your appliance energy consumption. Clean the lint filter after each cycle and scrub the filter with a toothbrush once a month to remove film and increase air circulation.

—Source: energy.gov



MY CO-OP

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative was held via teleconference call at 8:04 a.m. on June 25, 2020. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The agenda, minutes of the May 28, 2020 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.
- The Governance Committee agreed to make no changes to the policy language regarding Eligibility of Relatives of Directors. They will review the Deferred Payment Agreements language at the July meeting and present to the board at that time.
- The board approved to proceed with a Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program (REDLG) request for the Iola Car Show. The loan is subject to USDA approval.
- Ms. Shower gave a presentation to the board on Board Policy 401 – Internal Controls, regarding how the monthly balancing of the CWEC checking accounts is handled.
- The board cast their vote in the 2020 RESCO Wisconsin Board of Directors election.
- The board approved to hold the CWEC Annual Meeting on Thurs-

day, August 13, 2020, at 6 p.m. as a virtual (online) meeting using Perigon to assist with the online platform.

- Mr. Wade reviewed the results of the 2020 board self-evaluation that was recently completed.
- The board approved American Transmission Company (ATC)'s third capital call for 2020.
- The board approved Bonnie Ziolkowski and Rita Betker as the two replacement members to the Operation Round Up Board vacated by members who reached their term limit.

Operations and Engineering – Mr. Kurtzweil reported the Bass Lake project has been completed. An update was given on the ATC outage that occurred on June 10, 2020. A presentation will be given at the July meeting on the repair estimate from PGA for the HVAC system.

Accounting and Finance – Financial reports were reviewed. Ms. Shower reviewed the top 10 commercial accounts sales figures for the last three months. Ms. Shower also gave an update on the FEMA status from the storm that occurred in July 2019.

Member Services – Ms. Mazemke reported preparations will begin for the Annual Meeting that was approved for August 13, 2020. There was one Economic Emergency Relief Loan that was approved by the Executive Committee and closed on June 9, 2020. That program has been closed due to no additional interested members.

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

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.



BUTTERFLIES ARE WELCOME

On July 28, Meghan Slocombe, a seasonal field technician for Monarch Joint Venture, and Catherine Worley surveyed the approximately one-acre butterfly field next to the headquarters of Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative.

During the survey, they found 31 blooming plant species and 13 non-blooming plant species. There were also 101 common milkweed stems counted. On those 101 stems of milkweed, 16 monarch eggs were discovered in different stages of the growth process.

The butterfly field was planted in the fall of 2017 through an initiative by the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association Monarch Butterfly Habitat Restoration program.



The 2020 CWEC MEMBER APPRECIATION BREAKFAST

has been scheduled for **Saturday, Oct. 31.**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

We would like to extend a thank you to Ron Onesti for his time serving as a Director at Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative. Onesti has served as a CWEC Director from 2011-2020. When the Board of Directors met Thursday, July 30, Onesti was presented with a clock to recognize his service to CWEC.



MORE THAN 150 MEMBERS ATTEND VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING

Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative held its 2020 Annual Meeting virtually on Aug. 13, with just more than 150 members logging in and participating in the meeting.

The meeting was originally scheduled to be in-person on April 21, but was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. When the CWEC Board of Directors rescheduled the meeting, the board decided to make it a virtual meeting to make it as safe as possible for CWEC members and staff.

The virtual meeting lasted around 30 minutes. After the meeting was called to order by CWEC Board Chairman Anthony Buss Jr., the Pledge of Allegiance was said, and an invocation was done. Director Ron Onesti was also thanked for his nine years of service as a director. He could not run again this year because he reached his term limit as the District at Large director.

Key statistics for 2019, the statement of operations, and the balance sheet for the co-op were presented by Lila Shower, vice president of accounting & finance at CWEC. Buss Jr. presented the Chairman Report and Mike Wade, president & CEO at CWEC, presented the CEO Report.



Smith



Rombalski

Board members Tom W. Smith of District 1 and Sue Rombalski of District 3 were announced as winners in their re-election bids, with both running unopposed. Smith received 252 votes, while Rombalski received 310 votes.

It was announced that Michael Schultz defeated Gregory Loeser in the District at Large election, to fill the seat vacated by Onesti. Schultz received 569 votes, while Loeser received 370.

After the meeting, the following members who attended the virtual meeting were randomly selected for the following door prizes: \$100 bill credit – Thomas Printz; \$50 bill credit – Nancy Appleby, Delbert Seefeldt, and Virginia Kauffman; \$25 bill credit – Robert Lesczynski, Lois Kobleske, Michael Zimdars, Gregory Loeser, Darrell Oligney, Michael Hoffman, Gerald Lazarski, Aimee Bestul, James Krause, and Christopher Olson.



Schultz

We hope to be able to host an in-person annual meeting in 2021.



Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative will be closed on Monday, Sept. 7, 2020, in recognition of the Labor Day holiday. From everyone at CWEC, we wish you a safe and enjoyable Labor Day holiday.

CENTRAL WISCONSIN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HELPS WITH EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

When Josh Kolodziej from Boy Scout Troop 298 in Stevens Point contacted Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) to ask if it could help him install a new flagpole as part of his Eagle Scout project, CWEC didn't hesitate to lend a helping hand.

"One of our seven principles is Commitment to Community. It is in that spirit we are proud to be able to assist Josh with this project," said Brenda Mazemke, manager of Member Relations for CWEC.

Kolodziej's Eagle Scout project, which is a project that benefits the community, included having a new flagpole installed at the Dewey Town Hall.

"Before they (Dewey Town Hall) would just put out a flag on a little holder on the sign there," Kolodziej said about why he chose this as his project. "I figured it would be more appropriate if the town hall and the fire department had an actual flagpole to use."

Completing his Eagle Scout project required Kolodziej to plan the project, which included filling out plenty of paperwork and obtaining approval from different people.

"Eventually you're able to start planning out the project and purchasing materials," Kolodziej said in late June. "I

did that very recently. Now I'm actually getting everything ready to finally finish up the project, like setting up the flagpole and asking for volunteers to help with the actual heavy lifting."

Some of that heavy lifting was done by CWEC linemen Mack Yarbrough and Nate Singer. Using CWEC equipment, Yarbrough and Singer helped Kolodziej and a few scout volunteers install the new flagpole at the Dewey Town Hall on June 26.

"I feel privileged to help honor our veterans and show the respect they deserve," said Yarbrough about helping install the flagpole.

Singer added, "Whenever you can help the community out, no matter how big or small it is, it's very rewarding. It's always great to be able to give back to the community."

In order for the Eagle Scout project to be realized, Kolodziej also had to partake in fundraising for the materials required for the project. He accomplished this by contacting local veterans' associations and businesses in the town of Dewey area, as well as family and friends. He also created a flyer asking for donations, that he placed in the town hall during elections.

"I got a lot of people that way to do-



nate," Kolodziej said.

A flag-raising ceremony on July 18 was conducted by Plover Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 10262.

In addition to adding the flagpole at the Dewey Town Hall, Kolodziej and fellow Scout Troop 298 members installed a wall of blocks around the flagpole, and did other landscaping work around the town hall.

Kolodziej, who will be a senior at SPASH this fall, said he also plans to add a metal plaque in the area to recognize the project.

STOCKBRIDGE-MUNSEE STREET LIGHTS REPLACED WITH LED LIGHTS

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 75 street lights with LED lights in the Stockbridge-Munsee service area.

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 project comes after CWEC recently completed a similar LED light project in the village of Tigerton.

CWEC received \$13,417 through the grant to replace the existing light fixtures with energy efficient 100-watt or 150-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-pres-



CWEC Service Foreman John Bestul installs a new LED light fixture as part of the Stockbridge-Munsee light project.

sure 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 he didn't receive any feedback from residents regarding the new lights while he was installing them because much of the work was done during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bestul started replacing the lights in March.

LED lighting offers a clean and eco-friendly lighting that provides a significant electricity and maintenance savings to both communities and its residents.

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.

Bestul estimates he spent around 67 hours working on the project. "I am grateful to the USDA for making grant programs like REAP available to electric co-ops so we have an economical means to move to energy saving devices like LED lights," Wade said.



GAGAS FARMS RECEIVES REBATE FOR IRRIGATION UPGRADE

When Gene Gagas, who co-owns Gagas Farms with his brother, Clifford, had the opportunity to obtain a rebate when making energy efficient upgrades to the farm's irrigation system, he jumped at the opportunity.

"If it's (savings) out there to get, I'm going to try to get it," Gene Gagas said. "Every little bit helps."

He added that obtaining the \$2,600 rebate from Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) has allowed Gagas Farms to spend money on other needs the farm has.

In addition to receiving the rebate money, Gagas expects the farm's demand charge for electricity to decline because the project included replacing a 100-horsepower motor with a 60-horsepower motor.

"It will be easier on the power company, and easier on my pocketbook," Gagas said.

Besides replacing a motor in the farm's irrigation system, a pump was downsized, the well was test flowed, and a new irrigation pivot was installed. Gagas said the old pivot was outdated and more than 40 years old.

Gagas said the salesperson from Roberts Irrigation Co., Inc. informed him about the availability of the rebate, and did all the paperwork the rebate required.

"It was actually very simple," Gagas said.

Gagas Farms has been in the family for four generations, and is currently located in the Ellis area between Rosholt and Stevens Point.

"Basically, we farm all the way from Ellis to Rosholt with various parcels in between that are either owned or rented," Gagas said.

Around 2,000 acres of land is farmed each year according to Gagas. Crops that are grown include: potatoes, grain corn, sweet corn, peas, soybean, alfalfa, and rye.

Beef cattle are also raised on the side.

Gagas has high praise for the rebate program offered by CWEC.

"If anybody has the opportunity to utilize this program, they're foolish not to," Gagas said. "It doesn't cost anything and the thing is, in the long run, it can save money."



Gene Gagas (left) and Clifford Gagas (right), owners of Gagas Farms, received a \$2,600 rebate from CWEC when Gagas Farms upgraded its irrigation system.



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10401 Lystul Rd., P.O. Box 100,
Rosholt, WI 54473
715-677-2211 • 800-377-2932

www.cwecoop.com

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook

Mike Wade, President & CEO
Bert Lehman, Editor

Board of Directors

District 1

Anthony Buss, Jr.
Chairman
715-701-1358

Tom Smith
Vice-Chairman
715-701-2051

District 2

Lee Lehrer
920-851-4545
715-677-3850

Leonard Oppor
715-701-2042

Michael Schultz
715-370-1378

District 3

Elaine Eckendorf
Secretary-Treasurer
715-701-2052

Sue Rombalski
715-701-2053

Our Mission

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



CWEC RECEIVES FEMA FUNDS FOR JULY 2019 STORM DAMAGE

Over the past year, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative has been working hard filling out forms and sending information to FEMA in an effort to obtain FEMA funds to help cover a portion of the cost of the damage that occurred during the July 2019 wind storms.

Recently, CWEC received the final payment of FEMA funds to cover damage that occurred in the CWEC service area in Portage County. The payments were made under the Presidential Disaster Declaration that was declared on Aug. 27, 2019.

In April 2020, CWEC received \$27,247 in

FEMA funds, and recently received the final payment of \$64,221. The money received is composed of federal and state funds.

Accepting the FEMA check in April from Bob Weinert, emergency management coordinator for the Emergency Management Division of the Portage County Sheriff's Office were Kevin Kurtzweil, vice-president of Operations at CWEC and Lila Shower, vice-president of Accounting and Finance at CWEC.

Mike Wade, president and CEO of CWEC, accepted the final FEMA check from Weinert for storm damage in Portage County.